

WITH STEFANSSON IN THE ARCTIC

in white cups ornamented with gorgeous pink roses. She had not wept in vain. She had her husband, and her teacups—triumphant, smiling little Mamayauk.

We parted the best of friends. The Arctic is so big; and resentments are so small—and I simply had to have the sextant.

Two days later the *Challenge* weighed anchor and turned eastward. My new adventure had begun.

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platform about three feet high extended across the rear of the house. It was about eight feet long and was covered with the skins of ovibos and caribou. Several huge ice windows, nicely fitted into the turf walls, reflected the red glow of the fire. A number of ovibos-skins, sewed together into a big square and stretched across the room from wall-top to wall-top, made an ingenious roof.

We took off our outer coats and removed our worn-out boots and lay back on the luxurious skins. Little Guninana, Alingnak's wife, took away my old boots and hung them up to dry, and brought me instead a pair of deer-skin slippers which she had made as a present for me. In fact, that woman had made little presents for each of us. Natkusiak and Alingnak produced their slim tobacco-pouches and gave us a smoke—our first whiff for four months.

These Eskimos, Natkusiak and his newly wedded wife, Ikiuna, Pannigabluk, Alingnak and his wife, had been closely associated with white people ever since childhood. They would go on whaling voyages in the ships in summer, and spend their winters at the whaling ship's quarters. They were so used to the white man's diet of meat, tea, coffee, flour, beans, dried fruit, etc., that they considered it a great hardship to do without all these delicacies. When Alingnak and his wife had left their winter quarters at the *North Star* in the spring they had hauled with them as heavy a load as their sledge would bear of white man's food.

Obviously this could not last very long. So when they saw that their supply was rapidly diminishing they said to one another: "We have enjoyed all these good things; but our friends up there in the north haven't anything but meat to eat. Let us therefore put aside something for them before it is all gone."

So they had set aside some flour, coffee, dried fruit, tinned milk, and sugar. They quickly finished what remained, and all the summer long they had eaten nothing but meat, not touching a bit of what they had set aside for us. On our arrival the women put on a pot of coffee to boil and made some biscuits. It was indeed a treat.



GEORGE H. WILKINS

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ut no matter how much we enjoyed that meal, it was the sentiment at the back of it that we always remembered. Of all my friends there are few for whom I have a greater regard than for these good-hearted Eskimos.

The Commander had arrived from his inland hunt in the meantime ; and we all sat and talked far into the night. We learned that Storkerson, Castel, Split, and Lopez, Mrs Storkerson and Mrs Lopez were in Liddon Gulf putting up dry meat ; and that the *Polar Bear* was thought to have arrived during the summer. Natkusiak's party had not connected with Storkerson's since they had left in the spring, and so could not give us any very late news. Storkerson and Castel had both written reports to the Commander, and these he read to us.

Castel's was in effect what the natives had already told us : that when they left us at Isachsen they had headed south, landing on Loughheed Island and leaving a record on a hilltop. (We found by an examination of the chart that this cairn was on the only stretch of coastline that we had not visited, and that accounted for our not having seen it.) So Castel had discovered our island first—confound him ! Never mind ; we had had all the thrills of discoverers. And Castel deserved some compensation for having been removed from the command of our great expedition to Crocker Land ! After leaving Loughheed Island, Castel then headed straight for Melville Island, caching near Point Fisher the things intended for our use. He then joined Storkerson, who, in the meantime, had carried out his programme of going to the *Polar Bear* with the Commander's orders, and had brought back with him his family and Pannigabluk.

Storkerson's report to the Commander stated that Captain Gonzales had assured him that he would make every effort to bring his ship north during the summer. We also learned that Wilkins, who had abandoned the *North Star* camp on Banks Island and travelled over to the *Polar Bear* camp in the spring, had taken moving pictures of the Victoria Island people. He had afterward severed his

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connexion with the expedition, and had headed south with the intention of joining the southern party and taking passage out to Nome on the expedition schooner *Alaska*. Wilkins was a good man and we were sorry to lose him, but he had received news from home that had compelled his return to civilization.

Natkusiak told us that during the summer and autumn his party had killed fifty ovibos and ten caribou, and that they had dried the meat of some of these. But the best news of all was that they had discovered a coal-mine.

CHAPTER XIX

THE mine was on top of a hill about half a mile from Natkusiak's camp. Charlie and I visited it next day. There were several outcrops of fine lignite coal and black, gummy pitch. The coal was in layers, some of which were as thin as paper and could be kindled very easily by using a little of the pitch. All we had to do was to drive up with a dog-team and shovel the coal into the sledge. We made the round trip from the house to the mine, bringing home a load of coal, in about an hour's time.

The natives have a habit, when chewing gum, of flipping it over in their mouths with a startlingly loud, clicking noise which, when once heard, is not easily forgotten. I was sitting in the camp talking to Natkusiak when I heard immediately behind me this unmistakable sound. Looking round, I saw Ikiuna, Natkusiak's newly wedded wife, chewing gum. When I expressed my surprise that she should have chewing-gum when she had now been away from the ship for over five months, Natkusiak naïvely told me that they had indeed long ago used up the chewing-gum they had brought from the ship, and that now they were using in its place the black pitch they had found in the mine.

We should have liked to stay at this comfortable camp, but there were too many things to be attended to farther south. We spent only a day here, during which the women mended our boots and made us each a pair of mittens. Then we started south, taking with us a quantity of coal, which we left at Cape Fisher to be burnt during the winter by travellers *en route* between the two camps.

The trip to Liddon Gulf was made without incident except that Charlie developed a felon on his right forefinger

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happiest boy in the world, for I thought it would be only a question of talking my mother into letting me go. But here I met with real opposition. My mother, it seemed, had a number of friends who knew all about the North and the terrible hardships suffered by all who dared to venture into its icebound recesses. Only a few months before the newspapers had been filled with chapter after chapter of the terrible Stefansson tragedy, to my mother an expected verification of the terrors that lie in wait beyond the polar circle. Now since this tragedy, and the man at the centre of it, which seemed so remote from me at the time, were to have a very great influence upon my life and future work, I shall set down what was known about them then—all the desolate facts reiterated so often by my mother and her friends.

The glamour of the Canadian Arctic expedition had captured the imagination of the world. Where other expeditions had had but a single ship, this one, backed by the Canadian Government and the limitless resources of a great nation, had started with a fleet of three main vessels and a fourth as an auxiliary carrying freight, with a picked staff of scientific men, and Bob Bartlett, a seasoned Arctic navigator, in command of the flagship, the *Karluk*. But popular interest did not centre so much in the scale of preparations, or in the names of the eminent men who took part, but rather in the picturesque figure of Stefansson himself, whose reputation rested on two successful expeditions aggregating five polar winters. As far as one could judge from the papers, it did not occur to anybody that a venture under the command of such a man as Stefansson, assisted by a staff specially fitted for their work, could fail.

And yet the news of the expedition that came out of the North was tragic almost from the first. They had sailed in the spring of 1913. That autumn whalers brought south information that Stefansson had been accidentally separated from the *Karluk*, and had joined the *Sachs* and *Alaska*, which were wintering safely on the north coast of Alaska, while the *Karluk* with Bartlett and twenty-five men had

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been caught in the ice and carried off north-westward. Then followed a winter of suspense and no news, till one day in the spring of 1914 tidings were received which at first seemed to show that, although the *Karluĳ* had been crushed by the ice near Wrangel Island, all her crew had been saved. It turned out eventually, however, that Bartlett and thirteen others had escaped, although eleven of their companions had lost their lives.

These dispatches were followed a month later by news more startling. Stefansson, whose calm sanity of judgment no one had doubted, had committed suicide. Practically speaking, it amounted to that. Rather than admit defeat he had left the mainland of Alaska with two companions and a single dog-team, going north over the moving ice of the treacherous and lifeless Beaufort Sea. He had carried provisions for only a month and had already been gone five months when the news came out. He had preferred death to returning south with his expedition shattered, his judgment discredited. This was the verdict of public opinion, in which all the living polar explorers seemed to join. Captain Bartlett said unequivocally, "There is no hope." That seemed to settle it. Apparently no one remembered that when Stefansson went north his chief aim had been to explore the polar ocean; and it did not occur to anyone that Stefansson had refused to accept defeat when the *Karluĳ* was lost and had set out at the risk of his life to finish his work.

The Stefansson expedition, then, was a tragedy in the public mind. What affected me was that it was a tragedy in the mind of my mother and had coloured her view of the Far North, making her all the more determined that I should not risk my life in such a perilous country. Fortunately I was able to persuade Captain Louis L. Lane, of the *Polar Bear* (the ship Baldwin and I had selected to sail north on), to plead my cause for me.

Captain Lane was the son of a pioneer Alaskan gold-miner who, after a career of spectacular success, had lost most of his enormous fortune. Of the same forceful type

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as his father, Lane had embraced the life of an Arctic buccaneer—at forty he was fur-trader, whaler, miner, all in one, and was reputed to be one of the best 'ice pilots' the North had ever known. Captain Lane's arguments, combined with his forceful, vibrating personality, finally proved too much for my mother, and she reluctantly gave her consent.

Once reconciled to my adventure, my parents were eager to assist me in every way. My splendid little mother bustled about putting all my clothes in order and preparing boxes of delicacies for me to take with me, while Dad and I went round to various stores and selected an 'Arctic outfit'—at least, that was what we thought it was at the time!

The days sped by and the sailing date arrived. I had my outfit safely stowed on board, and then, just a few hours before we were to sail, my partner came down to see me, holding a telegram in his hand. It was from his uncle in Pittsburg, calling him home immediately. The uncle, it appeared, was dangerously ill and wanted to see him before he died. Baldwin said that under the circumstances he would not be able to sail with me, but would, after visiting his uncle, take one of the fast passenger steamers to Nome, where he would meet me. He said also that, not being satisfied with his camera, he had returned it, and that this delay would enable him to secure a first-class moving-picture outfit, which he would bring with him when he met me at Nome. As the boat I was sailing on was only a little fifty-five-ton power schooner, and as our captain intended to trade with the Siberian natives before calling at Nome, my partner would have plenty of time to carry out this arrangement, and so I was not worried.

Next came the moment of parting, the many embraces and handshakes and tear-dimmed eyes, for among the crew there were several other Seattle boys who likewise were out in search of adventure, and their relatives and friends, together with mine, and the reporters and photographers crowded the dock. Captain Lane's curt order, "Slack off!" was the signal for our last farewells, and amid a hearty

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cheer the little vessel backed away from the pier and headed across Elliott Bay.

The 3500-mile trip to Nome *via* British Columbia, Southern Alaska, Siberia, and the islands of Bering Sea had its general charm and its special thrills. Leaving Seattle, we wormed our way up the narrow, sinuous, wreck-strewn Inside Passage. The overhanging peaks, white, purple, or gold in the changing light, threatened to topple over and bury the little wooden towns clinging to the shelving mountain-sides. The silence of forested slopes and narrow valleys was broken now and again by the two trumpet-notes of civilization advancing upon this vast stronghold of the pines—the shrill toot of the donkey-engine and the roar of sawmill and cannery.

Eventually we emerged upon the broad sweep of the Pacific, to meet a storm that tore our whaleboats from their davits and bobbed them up and down beside us like so many toy balloons. One of these boats was swept completely underneath us three times, only to pop up like a cork on the crest of the next great wave. We came through without worse mishap and docked in the magnificent harbour at Unalaska. Unalaska, once a bustling city of twenty-five thousand inhabitants, when it was the gate to the Nome goldfields and the centre of the seal-poaching industry, now has a population of barely five hundred ; but it still retains traces of bygone splendour in its fine old Russian Catholic church, its warehouses, and its grey-bearded storekeepers, who recount the blood-curdling history of the city's past while they sell samovars and curios to the gullible tourist.

After the dance and jollification given in our honour we again set sail, and this time headed north-west into the Bering Sea, bound for Siberia. About this time our second mate, Harry Slade, was stricken with paralysis and died. There was the solemn burial ceremony when, with bared heads, we all stood in a circle round the white canvas-covered body while Captain Lane read a passage from the Bible ; then the moment of embarrassment when he started

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to say the Lord's Prayer and, not being able to recall part of it, looked nervously round for help; and lastly the moment of quiet when the body was put over the ship's side and the icy waters closed above it.

We arrived in due course at the little native settlement at East Cape, Siberia, where we were met by a podgy Russian judge in long black leather boots, bright brass buttons, and glossy sable cap. He was perfectly sober and determined to do his duty when he came aboard (for we had no licence to trade in Siberia), but after a most hearty welcome by the captain, and an evening wherein the flowing bowl passed freely, he departed—a trifle unsteady in the boots, with a bottle of Scotch under each arm, and perfectly reconciled to our trading as much as we pleased with his native charges.

A wild scene followed. Our decks were crowded with Eskimo and half-breed men, women, and children, dressed in brightly coloured clothes, furs, and seal-skin boots. Our Ethiopian cook became infatuated with one of the captivating 'ice maidens,' followed her ashore, and had to be brought back to the ship, where, balked of love, he reluctantly set about peeling potatoes.

After brisk trading we headed east across Bering Strait. On July 3 we arrived at the prosperous city of Nome, Alaska, just three months and nine days after leaving Seattle.

Needless to say, we had all become fairly well acquainted during the trip. Captain Lane had certainly upheld his reputation for cool-headedness and skill in the face of danger. I can still see him perched up in the crow's-nest bellowing down orders to the man at the wheel, laughing one moment and cursing a blue streak the next. The mate, Henry Gonzales, had been born in the Cape Verde Islands and brought up on the whaling fleet of the Arctic. He spoke with a slight Portuguese accent, was tall, handsome, servile to the captain, and domineering with every one else, except the Eskimo damsels, with whom he was a regular *matinée* idol. Slade's place of second mate had been

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filled by Johnson, one of the sailors. Herman Kilian and Tony la Vere were engineers. Martin Kilian, Lorne Knight, Charlie Andersen, and I were crew. We were all Seattle boys with the exception of Charlie Andersen.

I said we had become well acquainted. I had little idea then how well I was to know some of these men before I left the North, or that I was to learn from them something of the true nature of both heroism and villainy. Here, as I thought, my great career was to begin. Ashore, at Nome, my partner with our moving-picture outfit, new adventures, fame, wealth, awaited me. I leaped into the first whale-boat making for the beach.

My partner was not in Nome. Not only had he failed to keep his agreement, but he had not sent the photographic outfit. In short, I had been double-crossed. My hope of producing a great Arctic moving picture was blasted and my faith in the inherent goodness of mankind shaken. I looked back on my experiences in the bustling little Alaskan towns and thought of the wonderful opportunities lost of recording a budding civilization and how Captain Lane, at the time, had told me that when we visited these places on our return I could photograph them to my heart's content, for my partner would have joined me by that time. So much for dreams! The cold fact was that I was stranded. I knew no one in Nome, and I was twenty-seven hundred miles from home. My total assets consisted of five dollars in cash, a few clothes, a Mauser 8-mm. rifle, five hundred rounds of ammunition, and—as a touch of irony—an Eastman Kodak and a few rolls of film! I was in debt to Captain Lane for various things purchased from his slop-chest, and was without any means now of paying for them. Lane gave me my choice of continuing the voyage with him as a sailor before the mast, agreeing to pay me for my services a two-hundredth part of the value of the whales he expected to kill, which would enable me to repay what I owed him and, if the catch were large, might net me several hundred dollars in addition; or I could go to work in the Alaskan goldfields

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during the summer and pay him when he returned in the autumn.

The United States had not yet entered the War, and Nome was a very busy place; all its mines were running full blast, and labour was in great demand. I had once desired to dig gold in Bolivia. Now I found Alaska could give me the same occupation, but the country about Nome had long since been prospected until hardly a yard of untouched soil remained. I walked out to the mines, where I saw toil-worn miners digging gold for other people, and where I was told that I also could get a job digging with them for five dollars per day. Then I looked to seaward where the little *Polar Bear* was tugging at her moorings in the open roadstead. My mind was soon made up. I decided to go north. That decision was a turning-point in my career. Instead of the three months I expected, I was destined to spend six years north of the Arctic circle before returning to civilization.

About three days out of Nome we struck the polar ice-pack. It was early morning and my watch below. We were racing through the water at a great speed when suddenly I noticed that the ship was no longer rolling—as if by magic the waters had become calm. Then I heard a booming sound, apparently that of waves breaking on a rocky shore, and I wondered if it was to be our fate to founder on an uncharted reef. My reflections were cut short by a terrific crash that set every timber groaning and nearly threw us out of our bunks. I could feel the bow of the ship rising up and up. We stopped; the engines were reversed; then we started to slide down backward as if we were sinking stern first. I made a rush for the deck, but before I reached it we came to a level keel and started forward once more, only to fetch up with another bump.

On deck I had my first sight of the polar pack. All round us lay ghostly white objects half shrouded in rolling fog. As I gazed at this tremendous spectacle an indescribable feeling, half fear and half challenge, stole over me. How small and insignificant we were to pit our puny

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strength against this white giant! I thought of Stefansson and his two brave companions who had trusted their lives to this monster and had never been heard of again. I thought of Greely and his band of strong, hearty men, most of whom had starved or frozen to death; and then of Franklin and his hundred and twenty-nine men still lying frozen in the grip of the terrible ice-king, and I wondered how many of us would have the luck to return to our families and friends. But over and above this feeling of fear was a stronger one—the love of conquest. Even then the North was challenging, calling, tempting, taunting, and I knew I could never break away from it.

My poetic reveries were cut short by the stentorian voice of the mate bellowing out, "Hi there, you bunch of land-lubbers, get them boathooks out and shore off that cake of ice. Step lively now. Get a move on!" Small cakes of ice were milling round the rudder and we had to keep this free at all costs. We knew the ice was in separate cakes, but from our deck it looked like promontories from a continuous shore-line. The sun presently dispelled the grey, gloomy fog and revealed a scene of beauty. Overhead the clouds seemed to be on fire. We lay in a pool of deep blue water fringed with a border of gleaming white marble; a thousand fairy ice-palaces lifted their slender spires high; here and there a few gaunt, giant crystal masses stood sentry-guard, their long black shadows flickering over the white. Captain Lane came on deck and climbed to the crow's-nest.

"Take the wheel," he commanded. "Hard to port—steady . . . full speed ahead." And we were charging an enormous ice-cake on the other side of our lake. With bated breath I waited for the crash. Then, just as our bow was about to collide with the ice, came the sharp, quick order, "Starboard—hard over." The ship spun round like a top and we entered a narrow lead¹ which had been invisible from the deck, but which the skipper could see from the masthead. This lead was only a little wider

¹ A lead, in Arctic parlance, is a lane of water between two ice-fields.

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than the ship and was apparently no more than half a mile long. Yet there we were steaming along at full speed as if we really thought we could get somewhere.

At times the passage was so narrow that we would crash into overhanging snags of ice and send them clattering into the water. Again, we would encounter a field of small, loose ice, which we would ram at full speed, so that pieces the size of a chair or a piano would slide completely underneath us and pop up unexpectedly at the sides or stern. Those pieces that travelled underneath us until they reached the stern were a menace to the propeller, and whenever a cake of ice got caught in it we could hear a great burr as it was thrashed round. Later on our journey a piece got caught in this way and was solid enough to bend one of the blades so much that our speed was reduced from seven to five knots an hour.

It was fascinating to climb up into the crow's-nest and watch the captain navigating the ship through the ice. Viewed from aloft, the pack, broken and criss-crossed in every direction by innumerable leads, looked very much like a bird's-eye view of a great city. It was easy to imagine we were passing tall, massive skyscrapers with their thousands of windows dazzling the eye; over there a patch of dirty ice reminded us of the tenements; yonder was a lake; and close by ran a broad boulevard with small cakes of floating ice in place of carriages and automobiles. Next we found ourselves in Chinatown, twisting and squirming our way through crooked streets and narrow alleyways. Our lead broadened out again, and once more we were on a magnificent road, with scattered ice-cakes on either side like stately mansions. Now we ran into loose ice and commenced to break and smash and tear our way through.

Woe betide the steersman who got rattled and turned the wheel the wrong way! Once during my trick at the wheel we were steaming along a narrow lead at full speed, and I had to make a sharp turn to avoid collision with a heavy ice-floe. The captain shouted down, "Hard to
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large bull that was apparently sleeping in the water ; at any rate he did not notice us coming, and we gave him the shock of his life. A moment later he popped up beside the boat amidships, furious. His bloodshot eyes glared at us as he raised his ugly bewhiskered face above the water, revealing his enormous yellow tusks. But he did not seem to see just what he could do to get even with us. After an angry shake of the head and a defiant roar he disappeared from sight.

On August 7 we rounded Point Barrow, the most northerly point of Alaska, and headed for Herschel Island, which is some four hundred miles to the east, and about sixty miles from the mouth of the Mackenzie River.

At Herschel Island we considered ourselves to have reached the frontier of the northern world. Herschel is a village consisting of about two dozen frame buildings. The most conspicuous are the houses and stores of the Hudson's Bay Company, the barracks of the Royal North-west Mounted Police, and the various buildings of the Anglican Mission. The others belong to Eskimos and white trappers. We were the first boat to reach the island that year, and everybody was glad to see us. They crowded aboard, whites and Eskimos alike, eager to hear the news from the outside world.

That night was a gala occasion. The Hudson's Bay Company's large store was lighted up by smoky, broken-chimneyed, flickering lanterns ; and everybody in the village, dressed up in brightly trimmed coats and fancy boots, gathered for a dance of celebration. Eskimo girls in green petticoats, French heels, and wrist-watches danced and twirled in the brawny, tattooed arms of their sailor sweethearts to the tune of " After the Ball is Over " played on a wheezy accordion. The dingy, rough-boarded room was a twisting mass of fun and laughter and a riot of colour—the picturesque uniforms of the Police, the blue-shirted, red-handkerchiefed costumes of some miners from the Mackenzie River, the strange, many-pieced furs of the traders, and the brightly coloured, old-fashioned dresses of

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the coy Eskimo maidens, with their brown eyes soft or flashing. Fat old matrons waddled about smoking their black, shiny pipes ; and in the background were a few old Eskimo men, dressed in unromantic ready-made clothes, stolidly watching the fun.

Herschel Island¹ was formerly the wintering quarters of the Arctic whaling fleet, but now that the price of whalebone has gone down the fleet has disappeared and the few ships that do visit the island no longer find it profitable to winter there. Many a wild time had this little village seen in the early days, with ten to twenty ships gathered there at once. We used to sit for hours and listen to the tales of the old whalers—stories of fights and brawls, murders and weddings and drunken sprees. But those days are gone never to come again, and the Royal North-west Mounted Police now keep order in the land.

It was while we were at Herschel Island that we began to get more details of the death of Stefansson and his two companions. From the talk of the old whalers with half a century of Arctic experience, I gathered that Stefansson had not been the typical explorer of the old school who carried with him carefully measured rations of pemmican calculated to last the entire length of the journey. On the contrary, pinning his faith to a theory, he had expected to find in the bewildering mazes of the shifting ice-pack both food and fuel ! Food and fuel in the midst of a frozen ocean ! The thing was unheard of ; and Eskimos and whites alike had thought him mad when, against the advice of his friends and in spite of the opposition of his scientific staff, he had struck north, carrying only thirty days' supplies on his sledge, with the intention of exploring the Beaufort Sea as far as Banks Island. Then soon after he left land a terrific gale had sprung up, breaking the ice he was on into small pieces and carrying his party

¹ The natives at Herschel Island are the most sophisticated of any of the north coast of America because of their nearly uninterrupted intercourse with whites for the last forty years. The picture presented at Herschel on such gala days as the first boat's arrival, or at Christmas, is, therefore, not typical of the Eskimos as a whole.

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away. The supposition of their death had become a certainty when, several months later, some Eskimos found a broken sledge and a team of drowned dogs that had drifted ashore from the ice.

The whalers talked sententiously about Stefansson's foolish theory of 'living off the country,' and about his not having been a 'practical man.' Such bookish theories as his were sure to lead to tragedy in a stern place like the polar regions, which tolerate neither weaklings nor visionaries.

It seemed that Stefansson had left orders with his second-in-command that the *Alaska* should go east to Coronation Gulf and carry on detailed scientific work. But the other two ships of the expedition were to come to Banks Island, where they would meet him. "Meet him!" commented the whalers. "Stefansson has grit all right, but 'meet him'—hell's fire! who but a damn fool would think of meetin' him—he's dead as a door-nail!" One of the two ships, the *North Star*, had disobeyed orders and had gone with the *Alaska* to Coronation Gulf. Opinions differed at Herschel as to why the *Star* had disobeyed (most said because Stefansson was dead); but all agreed that the captain of the ship that did go, the *Mary Sachs*, had really gone to Banks Island without any idea of meeting him there, but rather through a sentimental desire to carry out the dead Commander's orders, however devoid of a 'practical' purpose such a course might be. This boat had not returned, and it was thought that she had been wrecked on the west coast of Banks Island.

Such were the general opinions at Herschel Island; but there were three men who believed Stefansson to be alive. One of these was Inspector J. W. Phillips of the Mounted Police, who had made a journey in the winter of 1914 with Stefansson from the Island to Fort Macpherson. Phillips knew that Stefansson on his former expeditions had lived for long periods entirely away from his base-camps. Furthermore, he knew that Stefansson was as good a seal-hunter as any native. Stefansson had told him that most of the terrors of the moving ice-pack of the winter ocean

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were imaginary, that the belief in a lifeless polar sea was merely a belief, and that he was convinced he could live on the sea-ice for years if necessary, securing seals to furnish food, fuel, and even clothing. "Stefansson said he was going to Banks Island, and I believe he is there right now," said Inspector Phillips.

Another stubborn optimist was the veteran fur-trader Captain Matt Andreassen, whose brother Ole was one of Stefansson's two companions. "My brother and Storkerson are the best backers any man could have. Stefansson explained his ideas to me. They sounded crazy at first, but the more he talked about them the easier it was to believe them. The *Sachs* went to Banks Island thinking they might see Stefansson's ghost there some dark night—she may have been wrecked and her captain and crew may all be dead; but I bet Stefansson, Storkerson, and my brother are in Banks Island right now!"

That was the verdict of Captain Matt Andreassen, but no white men agreed with him except Inspector Phillips. Neither did any Eskimo agree, except one family—Ilavinirk and his wife, Mamayauk, who had been with Stefansson four years on his second expedition. Ilavinirk said in effect, "Once we were encamped on flat land. Natkusiak was with us. He is about the best Eskimo hunter I ever knew. One day he went east hunting and Stefansson went south. When each of them was about fifteen miles away a blizzard came on. I said to my wife, 'Both of them will have to sleep out to-night. We may as well go to bed.' But my wife replied, 'We had better stay awake and keep the supper warm. Natkusiak may have to sleep out, but Stefansson will come home.' So it proved. It was midwinter. The dark and the blizzard had come on together. That night Stefansson came home with fifty pounds of caribou-meat.

"We Eskimos," continued Ilavinirk, "know only the land and the sea-ice near land; but Stefansson told me there is plenty of game on the ice far from land. I never heard anyone else say that; the Eskimos believe the

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opposite, and so do the whalers. But Stefansson is different from the Eskimos and whalers. He will come back."

I was somewhat impressed with these few dissenters, for they were the ones who knew Stefansson best. But I was more impressed with the 99 per cent. who thought differently. There was Captain Fritz Wolki, who had been in the Arctic since 1889—twenty-six years—and who dismissed all the 'superman' talk about Stefansson as twaddle. "A college professor who carries books in his sledge where a sensible man carries grub. Say, did you ever shake hands with him? He's got a hand soft as a woman's! I don't believe that fellow ever did a real day's work in his life. As for his being clever, I never could see it. Just having a lot of theories no one else agrees with don't make a man clever, not necessarily. I'll eat my shirt if he ever comes back."

And what did I think? I wasn't sure, but I did know that I felt a big admiration for the man who had dared to pit his judgment against that of the world, and to throw his life and reputation on the hazard.

CHAPTER II

AT home in Seattle, when I had thought about them at all, I had pictured the Eskimos as being a race of small, fat, yellow-skinned people who ate huge quantities of raw meat and blubber; a people who lived exclusively in snow-houses, and killed their game with spears and other primitive weapons; who trapped foxes and traded them away for bits of brightly coloured cloth, beads, or mirrors.

Evidently I was not alone in this belief, for when I was about to sail from Seattle a young woman I knew came down to the boat and handed me a package containing some beads, a little rubber doll, and a yard or two of red cloth, and asked me if I would be kind enough to take these things north with me, trade them to the Eskimos, and send back to her a set of furs. I could keep for myself any furs left over. I was delighted to accept the commission.

My first disillusionment came at Nome, where I learned that the Eskimos of Alaska were far from being the savages I had imagined; that there were Eskimos who owned power schooners and herds of reindeer; some of them were reputed to be worth as much as twenty-five thousand dollars. Clearly the Nome Eskimos would not be apt to trade a set of furs for the trinkets my friend had given me, so I concluded that I must go farther afield for real bargains.

During the first day at Herschel Island I saw on the beach an old Eskimo dressed in deer-skin clothing, and going up to him I asked him if he had any furs to sell. At first I could not make him understand, but a younger man came along just then who could speak remarkably

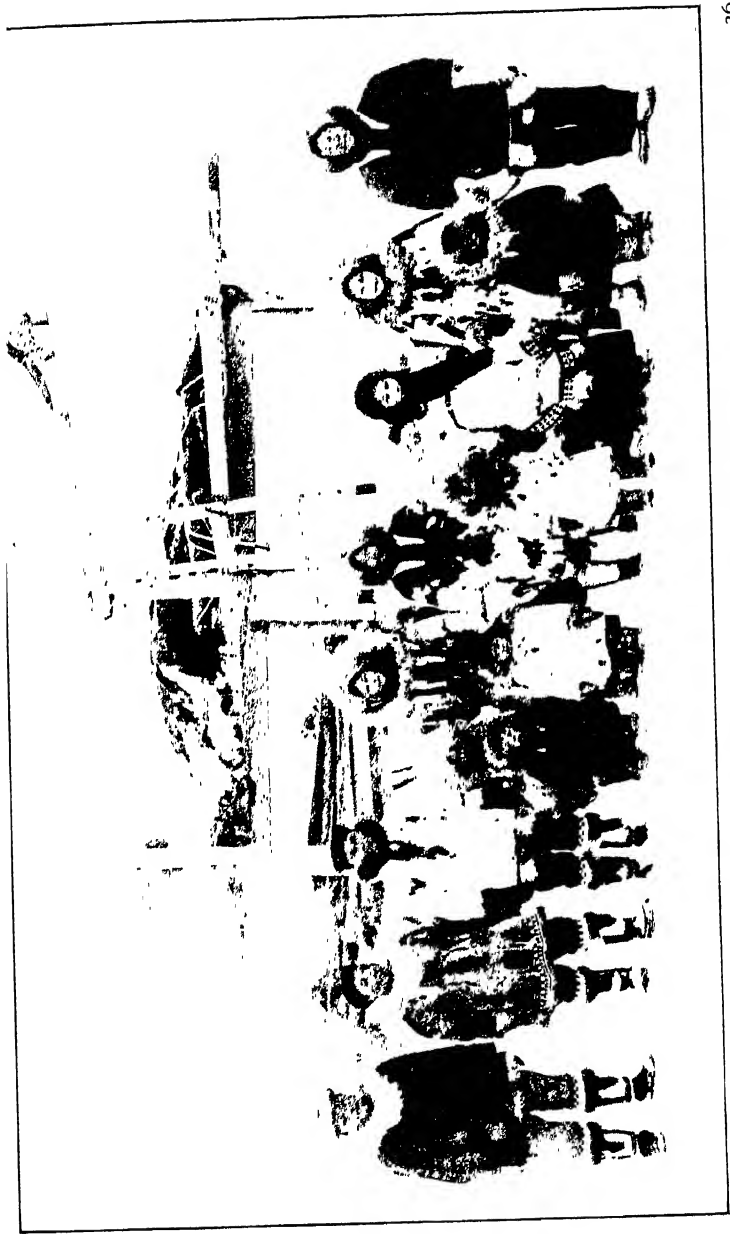
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good English, and he translated to the old man what I had said. Yes, the old man had furs; what would I give for them? I told him to come aboard the ship and I would show him. The two men very solemnly followed me aboard and down into the forecabin, where my trunk was stored. I pulled out of it the package and opened it, disclosing the beads, the red cloth, and the rubber doll that said "Goo-goo" whenever it was squeezed. The two Eskimos looked at my merchandise, then at me, then at each other, and burst into roars of laughter, not stopping until they were quite out of breath. Then, between chuckles, the old man said that he might give me a dollar and twenty-five cents for the outfit, but as for fox-skins—well, he wasn't born yesterday. I finally traded the things for a pair of mittens and considered it a bargain.

That afternoon I watched the captain trading with the natives. Eskimos crowded the deck. I noticed that, while the women were rather short, the men were of a good height and well-proportioned. Their straight black hair, black eyes obliquely set, and Mongolian cast of features strongly suggested the Japanese. They were less reserved than the Japanese—laughing and joking merrily, yet keeping a keen look-out for values. I found that they dealt in dollars and cents, and that they bought commodities with their money in much the same way that white men would under similar circumstances. Several of these Eskimos had made a good catch of fur the previous winter, and as a result bought flour, sugar, oatmeal, canned fruits, and vegetables by the ton—some bought phonographs, guns, ammunition by the case; and one man paid a thousand dollars for a whaleboat.

And these were the Eskimos of moving-picture fame, "the simple-minded children of the North!" It would be good sport to watch anyone trying to get the best of a bargain with some of these 'primitive savages.'

In the village of Herschel lived an old whaler, Bill Seymour by name. Bill was one of the characters of the North. He had been a prize-fighter in Australia before



A GROUP OF ALASKAN ESKIMOS

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Suddenly we heard a cry from the masthead where our natives were scrutinizing the distant shore through their glasses.

"Inuk! inuk! Man! man!" they cried, and pointed toward the land.

A man! Who? Wildly excited, we climbed into the rigging and gazed at a tiny black speck moving along the beach. Was it man or beast? Some of us were doubtful at first, but as we got closer the doubt vanished. It was a man! Captain Lane ordered the steersman to head directly for the lone inhabitant. But as we neared the shore a line of breakers decided the captain to change his course and head for an anchorage off the tip of Cape Kellett, some nine miles farther on.

The man on the land anticipated our intention and walked out toward the end of this spit to meet us. We made good speed and had been anchored some time when the stranger arrived opposite. Captain Lane put off in the whaleboat to meet him.

Who could he be? Some of us thought he was one of the sailors from the wrecked *Sachs*, the ship that had been sent to look for Stefansson's body. Others thought he was one of the so-called 'Blond' Eskimos who had been reported as sometimes living on Banks Island. We watched the returning boat eagerly. A joyful shout went up from the Eskimos. They recognized the man. "Sitepasin! Sitepasin!" The impossible had happened. Stefansson was alive!

An eager knot of rough, uncouth mariners and fur-clad Eskimos crowded together against the rail and stood transfixed, gazing at the strong, weatherbeaten face of the man sitting in the stern-sheets of the approaching boat. As I was not in the boat which went to meet Stefansson, I quote his account of the meeting: ¹

When I got to the end of the sandspit, half a mile from the ship, a whaleboat was lowered and came toward land with six men rowing and three or four passengers. Through

¹ *The Friendly Arctic*, p. 374.

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my binoculars I recognized Captain Lane, Constable Jack Parsons of the Herschel Island Mounted Police, and Herman Kilian, engineer of the *Polar Bear*. Presently I heard from the approaching boat shouts of, "He's not an Eskimo. He's got field-glasses—he must be one of the crew of the *Sachs*." Presently I heard Constable Parsons say, "I think that's Stefansson," to which Captain Lane replied, "Don't you think it. The fishes ate him long ago." A few yards nearer I heard Kilian say, "By God, that *is* Stefansson!" There were contradictions from several others, but my identification was soon agreed on and Captain Lane shouted an order: "Don't a damn one of you move till I shake hands with him!" The boat touched the beach and the captain jumped out. His men delayed just long enough to obey him and then scrambled out after, and I received the most enthusiastic welcome of my whole life.

This was the man we had believed to be dead! The hero who had risked his life for an ideal! I crowded closer to the rail, for not every one is privileged to witness the rescue of a world-famous man. But when the little boat came alongside I thought there must be some mistake, for the stranger—bronzed, and wearing rather shabby clothes—did not look a bit like a starving Arctic explorer. In fact, had I seen him at Herschel Island I should have catalogued him as a well-fed missionary. As he climbed up the ship's ladder I could see that he was not used to boats or ropes by the almost timid way in which he grasped the slender ladder rungs. Once on deck, he stepped over to Bill Seymour, with whom he shook hands warmly.

My first impression of Stefansson was one of astonishment more than anything else, for he was so entirely different from what I thought an explorer should be. His features of the typical Scandinavian type—high cheekbones, blond hair, blue eyes—might well belong to a descendant of the great Norse explorers; but his voice was soft like a woman's, his manners were almost, but not quite, effeminate, his hands were long, white, and delicate like an artist's. He was tall and slim, not broad and massive; his arms were—just arms—not muscular and

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brawny as an 'explorer's' arms ought to be. He looked out of place in his shabby, baggy, dirty white drill trousers and dirty white drill overshirt. Just like a missionary, only more cold and reserved. He walked to the cabin scuttle and descended, not deigning to notice the boy who was busy snapping a battered Kodak at him.

Although Stefansson looked as if he had never missed a meal in his whole life, we nevertheless could not realize it, and thought instinctively that he must surely be starving, or at least very hungry, and so our thoughts turned toward food. Our cook's face beamed with joy as he commenced to bustle round preparing a great feast for our distinguished visitor. But Stefansson, when asked what he would most like to eat, said he wasn't hungry. Not hungry! A year and a half in the Arctic wastes and not hungry—except for news, for he had been away from civilization since 1913, and did not even know that the War had started. But we were so anxious to hear his story that we did not give him very much of the world's news until he had told it.

Stefansson told us that after he and Storkerson and Ole Andreassen had left Martin Point in March 1914 they had travelled northward over the Beaufort Sea and had landed, some three months later, near the north-west corner of Banks Island; thence they had gone southward along the west coast, looking for the ships that had been instructed to meet them. They had found the *Sachs* pulled up on the beach near Cape Kellett, and had made the ship their headquarters for the winter. The following spring Stefansson had made another ice trip, this time north-westward from Cape Alfred on the north-west corner of Banks Island, and, after advancing into the unknown for a distance of two hundred miles, had turned eastward again and landed on the south-west corner of Prince Patrick Island, about a hundred miles north of Banks Island. He had then proceeded north along the west coast of Prince Patrick Island to map the unsurveyed sections. While in the vicinity of the north coast of Prince Patrick Island he had discovered new land.

WITH STEFANSSON IN THE ARCTIC

He spoke of moving ice-packs, snow-houses, polar-bear attacks; of the crossing of open leads between the ice-floes. He spoke of fine, fat seals and juicy caribou. He told us in a dispassionate, coldly scientific way of the complete success of his scheme of 'living off the country.' What a great adventure! And yet Stefansson related these things as though they were but commonplaces of Arctic travel, and no more exciting to him than riding in a tramcar is to us.

He had been back from this trip only a few days when we arrived at Kellett. His headquarters (the *Sachs*), he told us, were located about nine miles east along the Cape Kellett sandspit, but because of the high bluff immediately behind them we had passed by without noticing their camp.

That night Captain Lane called me aft to the cabin and asked me if I wanted to stay behind on Banks Island with Stefansson. He said that Ole Andreasen, who had accompanied Stefansson on his two ice trips, was leaving the expedition and that Stefansson was now looking for a man to take Ole's place. He said that Stefansson had asked him to recommend a man and that he had recommended me.

Would I stay on Banks Island with Stefansson?

Did I want to become an Arctic explorer?

I began to picture myself in a fur coat with a long sheath-knife strapped to my side, a rifle on my back, standing beside a team of shaggy-haired dogs and looking at some rugged, glacier-covered country which I had just discovered.

Would I stay with Stefansson? You bet I would!

Then Lane opened the door of the after cabin where Stefansson was and introduced us.

"Captain Lane tells me that you are out in search of adventure?"

Somehow I suddenly felt like a little schoolboy whose ideal has been shattered. It was the intense scorn with which he pronounced "adventure." It was as though I had been caught reading Nick Carter by a Sunday-school teacher.

"Adventure!" he repeated, scowling at me as if I had just committed some heinous crime and he were a magistrate

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about to sentence me to jail. Then, without giving me a chance to reply, "I have absolutely no patience with anyone who seeks adventure—an adventure is a sign of blundering incompetence; and if you are one of those who think themselves brave because they like to do dare-devil stunts you can't come with me! There is absolutely nothing heroic in Arctic exploration, for exploration, like any other work, is easily resolved into certain simple rules, which, if properly followed, render it as safe and about as exciting as taxicab-driving or a hundred other things which are done in civilization and done without a suggestion of heroism either."

Again I experienced that feeling of the reprimanded schoolboy, not unmixed with a certain resentment, for no one likes to have his cherished ideals of courage ridiculed. All through my northward trip and, in fact, ever since I first began to read and hear of him, Stefansson had appealed to my boyish imagination as a dashing adventurer. I had pictured him as one of those hail-fellow-well-met men, leading his men over the ice-floes to battle with the terrible forces of destruction. But my hero had vanished. I saw merely a cold, scientific mind, and I found myself wondering if this man had ever really battled with ice-floes, or even fired a gun at a target, let alone a bear, in his whole life; and all the time I stood there in front of him speechless, for I could say nothing. Then Stefansson, noticing my confusion, said more kindly that he didn't mean anything personal in his remarks about adventure, but that he merely wanted me to understand his viewpoint. He said that he had found young men to be the best material for Arctic work because of their quick adaptability to Arctic conditions, and that, as Captain Lane had highly recommended me, he would like to have me stay with him if I wanted to.

Of course I wanted to stay, for despite Stefansson's sarcastic and hostile attitude toward adventure I felt that we should have plenty of it before we had finished our explorations.

WITH STEFANSSON IN THE ARCTIC

Before asking me to sign the articles of the expedition Stefansson fully explained his methods of travel, and told me that it was now his intention to make a sledge journey to the new land he had discovered in order to explore and map its coastline. Just how large it was he did not know, but he had climbed a mountain twenty miles inland from whose summit he could see land extending to the north-eastward as far as the eye could reach. He would also endeavour to make another trip by sledge and dog-team across the polar ocean in search of other new lands, and to determine the character of the sea-bottom by a line of soundings taken through holes in the ice, or at the edges of open leads. He told me that if I joined the expedition I should have to live on meat exclusively while making the long trips, as he did not believe in hauling a lot of groceries when game could usually be found in abundance. I told him that I was willing to eat my boot-soles if only he would take me. Stefansson smiled and answered that it was quite possible that I might have occasion to eat those before the trip was over, for, while living off the country was generally safe, we might run into a restricted area nearly devoid of game, which would mean a shortage of food. But, on the whole, it was his experience that game could be found almost anywhere. So it was agreed that I should join the expedition.

I slept very little that night. Here was I, only twenty years old and a member of one of the most famous Arctic expeditions of history, soon to take part in long trips across the moving ice. I wondered how many other boys had had an opportunity such as mine, and I began to picture headlines in the Seattle papers, "Seattle Boy Becomes Arctic Explorer." When sleep finally came it was broken by dreams of charging polar bears and somersaulting ice-bergs. Just as a snow-house was caving in on top of me the covers were pulled off my bunk, and there was Charlie Andersen bouncing round the fore-castle like an Indian on the war-path.

"Noice, old scout, wake up! I'm going along too!"

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Charlie and I had been shipmates together for four months and I liked him. He was a Dane, from Copenhagen, a college man, in physique slim and wiry, with huge brown eyes, sparse brown hair, and a rather Roman cast of features. Although he had made several trips to Japan and China and had recently spent a year in Northern Canada, he was only three years older than me. We had become great pals on the northward trip, and now that we found ourselves booked for an Arctic winter we drew even closer together. There are few finer things in this world than a strong friendship between two boys. How eagerly and excitedly we reviewed our brief past and prophesied our future, both talking at once! I now saw the defection of my partner as a splendid stroke of luck. If he had come to Nome I should not now be on the staff of a famous Arctic explorer—and on the way to great adventures in places no man yet had seen.

"What do you think of *him*?" I asked. Charlie's impression was about the same as mine. But we agreed that a man who had Stefansson's record was not only worth watching, but worth following.

CHAPTER III

THERE was a large quantity of the expedition's freight, which included some badly needed scientific equipment, at Herschel Island, and so Stefansson decided to charter the *Polar Bear* to transport this outfit to Banks Island. An agreement was made whereby Captain Lane was to receive five hundred dollars a day for the use of the vessel, and we set sail next morning for Herschel.

The wind was strong and fair; we spread all canvas and ran before it, our sails set wing and wing. We must have made a pretty picture and a romantic one too—a clear blue sky; our shining white canvas; the Beaufort Sea, sky-blue between the white caps; Stefansson and his two youthful followers; and the crowd of whaling-men and Eskimos on the little ship's decks.

To the north and west a white radiation on the skyline proclaimed the presence of the great ice-pack. This glaring reflection, called ice-blink, can often be seen from a distance of thirty miles. In the present instance the ice was only a few miles away. This accounted for the comparative smoothness of the water, for had there been no ice close by we should have had a heavy sea.

As we sailed southward away from the shelter of the floes the waves began to mount higher and higher. The wind increased; we shortened sail and donned our oilskins, for the blue had faded from the skies and an ugly grey had taken its place.

A driving, drenching drizzle set in, which, together with the now thickly flying salt spray, made it impossible for us to keep dry. All hands not needed for the navigation of the ship were glad to go below, where we crowded round the galley stove, warming our numbed fingers and drying

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room. This he called the bed-platform, and said we should use similar beds in the houses we were to build when on trail.

The white men of our party looked on admiringly as the symmetrical snow-house took shape, but their amazement was mild compared with that of our Eskimos. I learned now for the first time that none of our natives had ever built a snow-house, and that this one was the first most of them had seen. It certainly opened my eyes to find that a white man could go into an Eskimo country and teach some of its people the very art in which they are commonly believed to excel. The conversation resulting from the building of the snow-house brought out the interesting facts, first, that the Eskimos inhabiting the north and east coasts of Siberia and the various coasts of Alaska do not know how to build snow-houses, and so far as we have any record never have known how; second, that those Eskimos living on the north coast of Canada, between Herschel Island on the west and Cape Bexley on the east, also do not build them. The Commander told us that formerly these last-named did occasionally build snow-houses, but that the art has been lost (due to an influx of western natives and ideas).

We know from accounts of travellers in South Greenland and Labrador and various other districts settled by the Eskimos that most of their inhabitants have long ago discontinued building snow-houses—if they ever did.

So of the various Eskimo peoples there remain only those living on the shores of Coronation Gulf, Victoria Island, Hudson Bay country, and North Greenland who can be said to build snow-houses. To one familiar with the statistics on Eskimo population it will be readily seen from the above that of a total population of about thirty thousand, less than one-third are familiar with the art of snow-house building.

We heated our snow-house with a blue-flame kerosene stove and covered the bed-platform with several thicknesses of caribou-skins. It was so much lighter than our wood-

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could carry and steamed directly for Herschel, where we arrived a few days later.

When it became known that Stefansson was not dead, but alive and aboard our ship, a great whispering crowd gathered at the water's edge. The whole village was there. As Stefansson appeared a sudden hush settled over all. It seemed as if no one breathed as the Commander walked down the gangplank. Then pandemonium broke loose. Every one wanted to shake his hand and pat him on the back at the same time.

Evidently Stefansson appreciated deeply the unaffected joy of his Eskimo friends; but I found myself wondering what his real feelings were toward the white men—and theirs. Was it possible for this scientist to feel any affection for men with whom he had so little in common? 'This scientist' was now my Commander, and I had a personal interest in learning just what other men thought of him. I soon saw that all those I talked with respected him—with the aloof respect which is accorded a great man. The admiration shown by these men for his remarkable achievement was the more accentuated because of the deep gulf between them. They admitted that they did not understand him. "What do you know about a man that doesn't drink, doesn't smoke, doesn't dance?" Stefansson had never been known to sing or even hum a tune; he detested athletics, loathed cards, never made a bet for money, and had never been heard using any stronger ejaculation than "Gee-whiz!" Well, what *do* you know about a man like that? Boy though I was, I could not help but be struck by the strange contrast between this Hero of the Hour and the conventional Hero of the Far North. Judging from all outward appearances, Stefansson had few 'human' traits and no human weaknesses. I decided that I was not going to like him!

As time went on it became apparent that the cost of chartering the ship would soon be more than its actual value. Stefansson therefore bought the ship outright.

Bill Seymour's and Storkerson's wives joined their

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husbands and took up their quarters aboard the *Pola Bear*. The Commander also engaged two Eskimos, Illur and Pikalu, with their families, and two additional sewing women, Pannigabluk and Mamayauk. When all their gear, tents, dogs, etc., had been brought aboard, our ship looked like a Noah's ark. Every nook and cranny had already been crammed full. The hold was solid with cargo, the after cabin had boxes and cases piled wherever there was a foot of spare space, the forecastle was a perfect jumble of Hudson's Bay blankets, dunnage bags, deer-skins, battered trunks, seal-skin 'poks,' dog-harness, tents, guns, Eskimo women and children, fur coats, seal-skin water-boots, tin pails, buckets, dishes, a phonograph, and seamstress Pannigabluk even had an old cotton umbrella which she guarded jealously. On deck there was no deck to be seen. The booms had been hoisted up to make room for the deck-load. Case after case of pemmican and rice wedged in from rail to rail, drum after drum of distillate and kerosene, barrels of butter, crates of desiccated vegetables, on top of which was stowed the lumber for our winter house, formed a deck-cargo six feet high. About twenty dogs of all colours, sizes, and dispositions, to the collar of each a name-tag flapping, were chained to the stout lashings which, running athwart the ship from rail to rail, secured the deck-load. Our three whaleboats were filled with sledges, sheet-iron stoves, dogs and what not, even the wheel-house was packed to the ceiling, there being left only room enough for the man at the wheel to steer.

Since we had last touched at Herschel Island a number of other boats had arrived, until now the community numbered about fifty whites and two hundred Eskimos. One of these boats was commanded by Jack Hadley, a veteran Arctic whaler who had been a member of the crew of the *Karluk* and who, while stranded for a year on Wrangel Island, had, through his understanding of Arctic conditions and his prowess as a hunter, saved the lives of a number of his comrades. Hadley was overjoyed at finding his old Commander safe and sound, and when

WITH STEFANSSON IN THE ARCTIC

Stefansson proposed that he should again join the expedition his keen blue eyes sparkled with anticipation despite his fifty odd years. After hearing Hadley talk about his association with the Commander I began to modify my early impressions. Hadley used to say that although Stefansson had a good many 'queer' ideas and wasn't what is called a 'good fellow,' he was at all times very considerate of his men and never asked them to do anything that he would not do himself.

Among the 'mosquito fleet' at Herschel was the small power schooner *Atkon*, owned by some missionaries who were intending to sail eastward in her. As Stefansson knew these missionaries were unfamiliar with the handling of a boat he sent Hadley along with them to pilot their ship from Herschel to Baillie Islands. They left several days before we did and we expected to find them waiting for us at Baillie. But when we got there on August 24 the natives said that the *Atkon* had not yet arrived and that they knew nothing of her. We could not very well sail away and leave Hadley behind, so the *Gladiator*¹ was deputed to go in search of the missionaries. A day after her departure the *Atkon* pulled into the harbour. It seemed the two ships had passed each other unawares in a fog. Now we had to wait a couple of days for the *Gladiator* and those of our men who were aboard of her.

This loss of time was serious, because it imperilled our plans. The Commander had purchased the *Polar Bear* with intent to sail as far north as possible while the water remained open, and to establish a base-camp either on the north-west corner of Banks or north-east of Banks or on Prince Patrick Island. The object of the north base was to put us nearer the scene of our coming explorations. The ocean west of Banks had already been explored the previous year; the Commander's chief objects now were to revisit the new land and to map it, and to make another ice trip to explore that part of the Beaufort Sea lying north of his former ice journeys—in that part of the Arctic

¹ A small schooner at Baillie Islands that belonged to the expedition.

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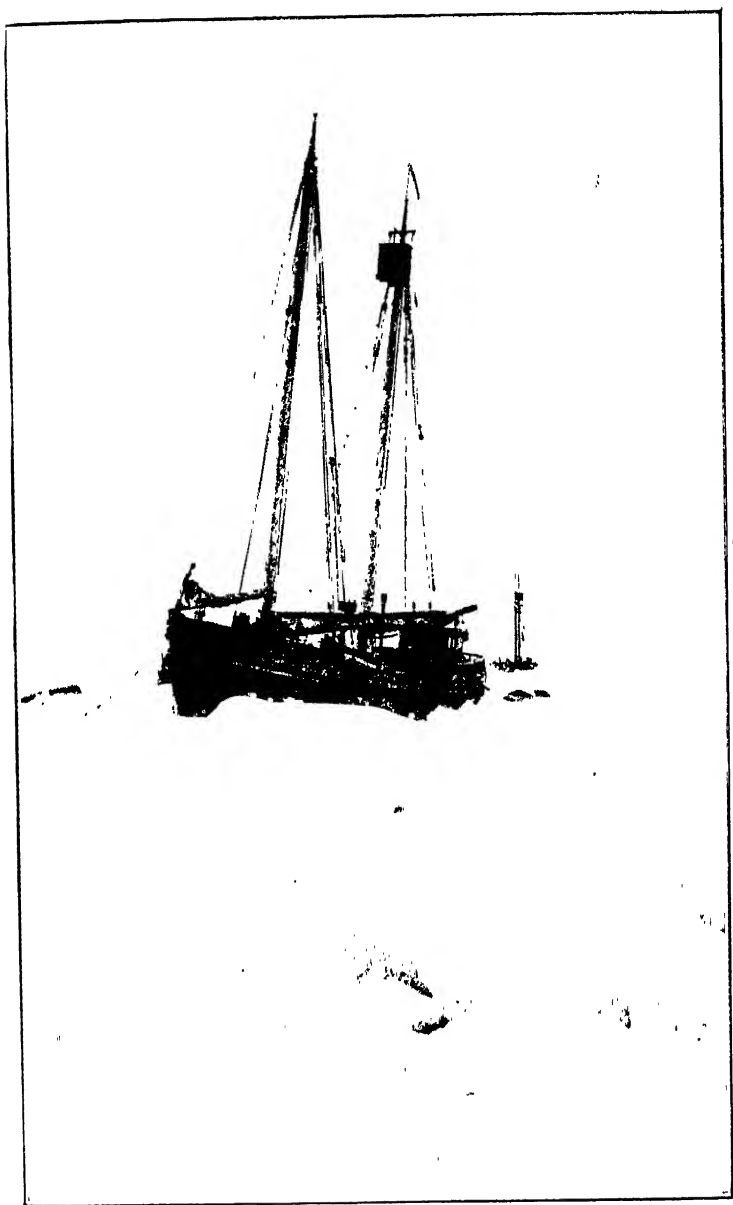
marked on the charts by the blank space that spells 'unknown.'

We had already seen the ice-blink. We knew that the great Arctic ice-pack, a thousand miles in extent, hovered just beyond the western horizon, and that one day's stiff westerly wind would sweep this giant mass down upon the coast of Banks, closing the sea-lane north for another year.

So far the winds had been southerly or easterly. If they would but continue to favour us for a few days longer we might even yet sneak northward along the west coast of Banks to our projected base. But when we arrived at Kellett on September 2, easterly winds had changed to westerly, bringing the outlying floes upon us. We still hoped to work through these floes northward, and we made ready to try it. The Commander set Knight ashore to stay with Captain Bernard of the *Sachs*, who had charge of the Kellett base, and ordered Storker Storkerson and Levi Baur, cook of the *Sachs*, to accompany us; Captain Lane, Johnson, and La Vere had departed for civilization in the *Gladiator*. Gonzales was now promoted to be captain of the *Bear*, and Seymour was made first mate. We hurriedly landed a few supplies and took aboard more sledges and twenty additional dogs, and headed out to sea. But when we reached the point of the sandspit above Kellett we met the solid pack. We steamed west along its jagged southern border looking for an opening, and after going ten miles we turned north—only to come up against the massed floes.

The *Polar Bear* was a game little craft, but she only drew eight feet of water, and to attempt to pit her strength against that of ice thirty feet thick would be like hurling a split pea at a stone wall.

Now, seeing that all northward progress on the west coast was barred, the Commander decided to sail round the southern end of the island and make an attempt on the eastern side, where we should be sheltered from the Beaufort pack by the land. Our new objective was Melville



THE "POLAR BEAR" IN ICE

WITH STEFANSSON IN THE ARCTIC

Island, the best game country in the Arctic, some three hundred miles north. Prince of Wales Strait is a narrow lane between Banks and Victoria Islands, and there was a chance that, being almost landlocked, it would be free of ice, unless Melville Sound, the northern entrance to the strait, was packed and sending its floes south. It was just a chance—and we took it.

All went well until after we rounded the black cliffs at Nelson Head and turned northward into the strait, which was filled with scattered floes. Our westerly wind shifted to easterly, drove the floes against the coast of Banks, and left a lane of open water along the Victoria Island side. We entered this lane and chugged along under full steam for some ninety miles. Then the wind blew off Banks and drove the ice upon us.

The weather turned cold, with hail, sleet, and snow, bringing on the first blizzard I had ever seen. The snow was flying so thickly that we could not see the shoreline, and all the while the ice came closer.

Our ship was so heavily overloaded that it was impractical to try to 'work ice' without lightening her. So we threw overboard a number of hundred-gallon drums of distillate, which floated ashore before the westerly winds. But even then we were still too low in the water. The Commander ordered us to lower the boats and take part of our deck-cargo to the beach, to be picked up later either by ships, if the ice conditions should improve, or else by sledge in the winter.

Then commenced a race against time. Could we strip the *Bear* for her tilt with the ice before the floes massed? Already floating cakes swept by us; they grazed the whale-boats as we tugged for the shore. The boats grounded in the shallows near the beach; we leapt out and stood in water over our boot-tops unloading. We struggled up the bank through falling snow with the heavy cases to put them safely beyond the tide-mark.

The first load landed, we went back for a second, third, and fourth. The wind increased, more ice drifted in.

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The work took several hours. Every now and then we cast anxious glances seaward. But at last we hoisted the boats aboard, and the captain climbed to the masthead. "Full speed ahead." I had seen the little *Bear* smash her way through ice before—would she do the trick for us now? Crash! But the barrier did not yield. "Full speed astern." She backed off to gain momentum for her second charge. Again she drove at the ice. Another crash that shook her from bow to stern—we rocked on our feet and the dogs howled. Still she could not break through. The captain came down from the crow's-nest to consult the Commander. He had seen that the lead he was trying to break had closed up.

Night was falling, and we tied up to a heavy floe. As the floe drew more water than our ship it would ground before she would, and so prevent us from being shoved up on the beach.

The Commander seemed indifferent to the ship's peril. He merely remarked that it looked as if we were to have an early fall, and then went below to read a novel.

During the night the ice became more and more closely packed. The ship groaned and creaked with the terrific pressure. Small cakes were tilted up on edge, and ice commenced to work underneath us until we found ourselves being slowly lifted bodily out of the water. The temperature dropped to below freezing-point, and with the inky darkness came snow, sleet, and more wind. The groaning of the ship's timbers could be heard above the roar of the blizzard. "Beset by ice!" How often had I read that caption in Arctic books; now I was learning what it meant. Though my heart was in my throat all night long as the ship continued to creak and tremble, I was much elated by the prospect of having an exciting shipwreck story to tell when I got back to civilization.

Those of us who stood on deck at dawn looked through the falling snow in vain for open water. During the night the floes had massed and shifted, caught us fast, and carried us about four and a half miles north. Unbroken ice stretched

CHAPTER IV

THE Commander called us into the cabin and gave us a talk on the proper way to handle dogs, then turned us over to Storkerson, who was to have charge of the sledge work. Mittens, boots, and fur coats were given out to those of us who needed them, and we followed Storkerson on deck.

Storkerson dropped a light sledge overboard on to the ice, and then told us to bring him a large coil of heavy rope for a dog-line, while he collected harness for a team of five. This was not done as quietly as it might appear! Our dogs, from their vantage-point on top of the deck-load, could see what was going on. They, as well as we, knew that winter had come; from the first coming of the ice they had been restless—restless because to them also winter meant travel. When they saw men busy with sledges and harness they went wild. They had not been hitched since the previous spring. Now they were going somewhere! Howls, barks, bellows, roars, rent the air; and the crest of our deck-load turned into a whirling mass of furry bodies, panting red tongues, gleaming white fangs, as forty dogs leaped and tumbled over each other, straining at their steel chains. The first dog that Storkerson loosed and tried to lead to the gangplank that had been put overside, nearly dragged him bodily over the rail. Our Eskimos unfastened others, which pulled their captors madly across the ice to the sledge.

We got them harnessed at last in spite of their excitement and endeavours to get into a free fight. One of the Eskimos ran toward shore, which was about three hundred yards distant; we loaded the sledge; Storkerson let go the leader, and the dogs whizzed the bouncing sledge at top

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speed after the Eskimo. On the beach we stretched out the dog-line and weighted the toggles at the ends with boulders, so that when the job of unloading was finished we could immediately hitch our dogs to the line. When we returned to the ship other men were unleashing the deck-load. More sledges and dogs were pressed into service. Soon we were all busy freighting cargo to the shore. I found it great sport to drive dogs. While my team dashed off after the Eskimo running ahead, I grasped the handle-bars at the stern to steer. A good sledgeman's skill, so Storkerson told us, is in keeping the sledge from upsetting when one runner strikes an unevenness in the ice. Then a swift turn of the handlebars must swing the sledge so that both runners pass over the obstruction on a level.

The dogs too had a great time, and pulled for all they were worth. Some were big, bushy-haired fellows, others were lean, lank, and hungry-looking; a few were short, fat, and fuzzy, and they ranged in colour from jet-black to reddish browns and yellows and whites. Most were quite good-tempered, but a few would let only those whom they knew go near them. After the day's work was over we tethered them to the dog-line ashore at intervals of six feet, to prevent the otherwise inevitable fight. They seemed glad to lie down and rest; but they soon jumped up when they spied old Jim Fiji approaching, dragging a hand-sledge full of whale-meat and blubber.

The Commander put Hadley and the engineers, who were our best carpenters, to work to build a house out of the lumber we had brought along for that purpose. Then he himself took the natives and some toboggans and dogs and started inland to hunt caribou for our winter's meat-supply.

Although I had heard it said that Stefansson was an expert hunter, I found it difficult to visualize this scientist with the lily-white hands, who so far had done nothing but read novels or pound away on his little typewriter, making long journeys in search of game, and getting those hands of his all bloody butchering the slain. I had my doubts about our winter's meat!

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That night I overheard Gonzales and Seymour discussing the Commander's sudden departure for the hunting-grounds. They thought it peculiar that the leader of an expedition should leave his ship and go inland for a week or two with only natives for company, and said that Stefansson was only trying to avoid the responsibilities of unloading the ship and establishing suitable winter quarters for the men. One of them said that Stefansson could hunt all right, but that he didn't know anything practical, such as splicing rope or using a saw or hammer—"Why, he can't even sharpen his own knife," he added; "but crafty! Say, the only reason he ain't here to look after this job himself is because he knows he don't know nothin' about real work and is afraid of showing himself up."

After hearing this discussion Charlie and I began to wonder how things would turn out for us, for we were the only two of his new *Polar Bear* men who had agreed to accompany him on trips over the moving ice. After what we had just heard about Stefansson's incompetence I wonder if we should have dared to continue with him if we could have foreseen, that night, the critical situations we were to face out there on the polar ocean when our very lives were to be trusted to his judgment and efficiency.

The next day we continued the work of unloading the ship. Several of the crew were sent up and down the coast to pile up what driftwood they could find, so that the snow would not cover it and prevent our finding it in the winter. It took us about a week to unload, and then we were put to work hauling to camp the stores that had been landed on the beach when we were beset by ice. These were about two miles south of our winter quarters.

In about three weeks from the time we had been frozen in our house was completed and we moved in. It was a one-roomed house with a high gable and eaves six feet from the double-boarded floor. Bunks, one on top of the other, lined the back and one side. Over the rear bunks there was a platform—a sort of loft—which was reached by a ladder, where the captain and Mr and Mrs Seymour had

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their quarters. This place was like an oven as it was right under the ceiling. The other bunks were not so warm. Opposite the bunks, to the left of the door, was the stove, with a pantry partitioned off near by. The long, white oilcloth-covered table was in the centre. For chairs we used cases of condensed milk. One reason for using milk-cases was that the evaporated milk we had would spoil if it was allowed to freeze, and so we used as many milk-cases as was convenient.

In the daytime we were kept busy outside hauling provisions from the cache, banking up the outside of the house with snow, etc. Before the Commander left for his inland hunt he had shown me how to make the meteorological observations, and it was my duty to make the rounds three times daily to the wind-gauge, barometer, and thermometer which Storkerson had set up on top of a mound a few hundred yards behind the house, and enter the readings in the weather-book. I also had to record the various conditions of the atmosphere—whether it was snowing, foggy, hazy, clear, etc. The Commander had given me a book on climatology which I studied assiduously during the evenings so as to familiarize myself with the various phenomena it was my duty to observe.

We seldom entered the house during the day, except for a minute or so at a time to fill a pipe or get a drink of water, for when we did it bothered the seamstresses, who were seated on the floor or at the table, chewing tobacco or smoking, with their sewing spread out all about them. Some were using the hand sewing-machine, making white drill show-shirts which were of the same shape and pattern as our deer-skin artigis, over which they were to be worn. The artigis is a one-piece coat without a slit down the centre. The hood, which covers the head and neck, is sewn on to the coat. The artigis is put on in the same manner as a sweater. It is without question the best garment devised for Arctic temperatures, and being made of deer-skin is about twice as warm as wool. The women sitting on the floor were busy scraping the outer tissue from the deer-skins

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in order to soften them for sewing up into clothing. For this they used carved iron scrapers of various designs. Some were made of pieces of one-inch iron pipe about two inches long, set in short wooden handles. The ends of the pipe were sharpened and were pushed along the surface of the skin, which is stretched between the woman's knees and her free hand. After the outer tissue has been removed the skin is wetted and scraped several times more until it becomes as soft and pliable as a piece of woollen cloth. The women then cut it up into whatever shapes are needed. They use for this purpose an *ulu*, or curved-bladed knife, which looks somewhat like a meat-chopper. The clothes are sewed with dry deer-sinew, which resembles ordinary thread except that the threads are short. The needle used is three-cornered and varies in size according to the class of sewing. Some women are much better seamstresses than others and take a great deal of care to make all their stitches small.

In the evenings, after the day's work, the officers and some of the men generally played cards, and sometimes Mrs Seymour would start her phonograph and then we would watch the women dance. They called it a 'hula-hula,' and a 'hula-hula' it was. It was a sort of compromise between their native dance, which consists of swaying the body and waving the arms to the beat of a drum, and the South Sea Island dance taught them by the whalers. It was funny to see Eskimo women 'hula-hula' to the tune of "Alexander's Ragtime Band," and smoke their long black pipes at the same time.

In the daytime we were all busy at our various tasks with no time for conversation or for 'mooning about.' But in the evenings within the house we were dependent on one another, our own thoughts, and our books. The latter included the Bible, works on geology, astronomy, and modern science, Comte's *Fundamental Principles of Positive Philosophy*, the Royal Geographical Society's *Hints to Travellers*, Tennyson, *Julius Cæsar* and *The Merchant of Venice*, Pope's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, *The Ingoldsby*

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Legends (the Commander's favourite), Frederic Harrison's essays, Bernier's report of his expedition to Melville Island, and *The Wandering Jew*. The Commander, Charlie, and Storkerson and I sat round on boxes or lay in our bunks reading. Most of the others played cards.

"Ha, ha! de bes' man he always win. Dat's me! I took little wind out of you feller's sails dis time—eh, Jim?"

Gonzales has won the rubber, and, glorious braggart that he is, he is telling the world. He sits tilted back on his box, his black eyes and white teeth flashing, his dusky satin skin gleaming under the lamp. The suggestion of a kink in his glossy hair is not amiss; it matches the curly growth on his chest. His navy blue shirt, open at the throat, and his very fancy vest made of musk-rat skins fit sleekly enough not to disguise his magnificent proportions. His clean-cut features and tall, lithe, powerful physique, his swiftness and grace would do honour to any desert sheik. With a "Step lively! Shuffle dem cards!" to Seymour, he fills his pipe from a new calico pouch gaily broidedered in scarlet. Is it the work of little seamstress Mamayauk who casts sly, admiring glances at him?

His partner, Jim Fiji, cuts the cards. Slow, gentle, grave-faced Jim is talking about his dogs. He loves them, and that is why Stefansson, also a dog-lover, has engaged Jim to be our dog caretaker.

"Dat dog, I t'ink him craze. I say, 'Gee!' he go 'Haw'; I say 'Haw!' he go 'Gee.' Yes," he adds, meditatively, "I believe him craze."

Jim is a Samoan. He came to America as a lad with a group of natives to be exhibited at the World's Fair in 1893; and at San Francisco, as he looked for a ship to take him home, he was shanghaied aboard an Arctic whaler. He has grown grey in the North, and would not exchange it for a whole island of coconut-palms and flower-girdles. He is dark-skinned, well made, strong, with as unhandsome a face as ever man wore. Kindly Jim; let him hear some notorious polar villain's misdeeds recounted, and he will say plaintively: "Ye-es. But I t'ink him good man too."

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Jim is a fit partner for Gonzales, for neither bullying nor braggadocio ruffles his eternal calm.

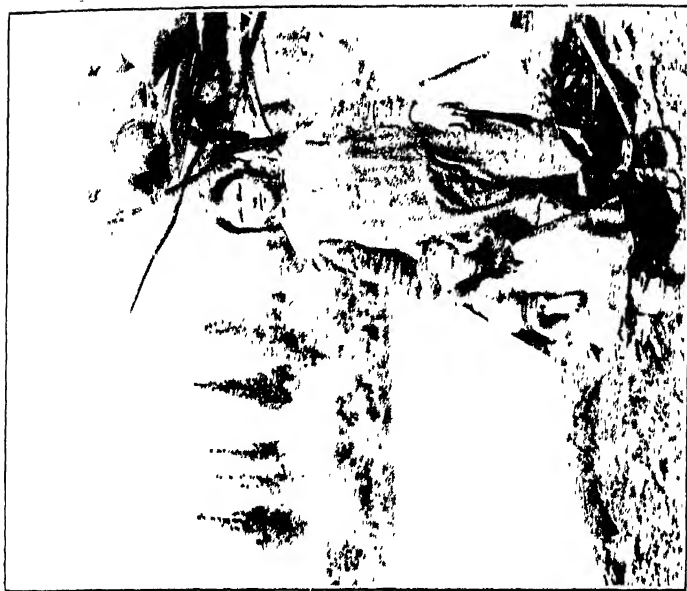
Their opponents are Big Bill Seymour, the mate, and Levi Baur, the cook. Seymour has keen, rather fierce, little grey eyes under long, bushy eyebrows. He is an Australian, was once a prize-fighter, and is now the hale and hearty giant of the whaling-crews. The oldest man among us, he is nearing sixty years; and however rough a talker, he has been all right so far when absent from liquor. Levi looks like the original singer of that ditty, "Fifteen men on the Dead Man's Chest—Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum." He is seamed and lined by twenty years in the North. He has lost one eye; and he wears a black bandanna drawn over one ear and knotted behind. He is a Swiss, an educated man, the son of a large manufacturer of watches. He was brought up to his father's trade, but he went wild; and at last the wildest place in the world got him. Now watches are his peaceful pastime. He carries his kit of fine tools everywhere, eyeglass and all, and borrows a watch here and there for the sheer pleasure of taking it to pieces and putting it together again. Usually he is brimming with fun. But to-night he has two weighty problems on his mind—a losing game of whist and a batch of bread in his cookstove.

Farther down the long table four of our Eskimos are also deep in whist, which the Herschel natives long ago learned from the whalers. Taciturn Illun and volatile little Emiu—nicknamed 'Split-the-Wind' because of his dashes ahead of the dogs—Pannigabluk and Annie Seymour, who is a keen player. When Annie closes her teeth firmly on her pipe and takes a long, narrow squint at her hand, beware! Like all the wives in our party, she is mission-trained and legally wedded; but she excels the other ladies in accomplishments and in elegance. She is the *première danseuse* of the 'hula-hula' ballet. She owns the phonograph, and a pair of patent leather boots. Pannigabluk, however, has a Prayer Book and a cotton umbrella, and therefore feels no inferiority. The Eskimo boy, Palaiyak,



STORKERSON

(In early spring it gets too hot for comfort)



MRS STORKERSON

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I watch him read them—news-stories of his terrible fate, interviews with explorers, sea-captains, scientists, geographers, oceanographers, ice-dealers, and snow-shovellers, on the absurdity of his theory that any game lived in "the polar ocean without life"; editorials praising his heroism, editorials lamenting his folly, verses by minor poets likening the North to a gigantic polar bear, the icebergs to its teeth, and the lost explorer to a crushed bone; obituaries galore. He reads them all, carefully, line by line; he reads them with zest.

Sometimes he looks up and I catch the blue gleam of his eyes—that suddenly deepen in colour and flash when his imagination is stirred. And I think that, while no doubt it is amusing for a man to read about his own demise, it is rather a childish thing for Stefansson to be doing. Has he no thought to give to that group round the table on whom he too must depend? Does he know what Gonzales and Seymour say of him as he sits there looking over the top of a Sunday 'feature' page into space, ignoring us all?

I did not then know the whole story of Stefansson's expedition up to that date, or I might have interpreted differently the causes of his triumphant glee as he smoothed and read his Press notices. He should have been far better able than I to appraise that group around us; perhaps he was. But to Stefansson the dangers of treachery were probably minimized by the results of his experience. The story of his success had been also a record of deliberate obstruction, ignorant meddling, double-crossing. But all that had not greatly mattered. It had not stopped him!

And chance had favoured him. For it was just pure chance that the little *Polar Bear*, pursuing whales in Beaufort Sea, had nosed up to the Kellett sandspit and found him. And he had bought the *Bear* and struck out north with her and with the men aboard of her—such as we were—not his selection, but the gifts of blind chance to him for good or ill.

"Don't I tell you fellers de bes' man he always win?"

Gonzales swaggers up, stretches his arms, throws back his handsome head, laughs—victor for this night.

CHAPTER V

WHEN the Commander returned from the caribou-hunt he had left the Eskimos, Pikalu and his wife, inland at the hunting-camp, to guard the meat from wolves and also to hunt. The ground was by now (October) pretty well covered with snow, and as it was advisable to get our meat hauled home as quickly as possible, the Commander told Martin Kilian and me to hitch up a team of dogs and run out to Pikalu's camp and return the next day with a load of meat. Martin and I were glad of this opportunity to get out into the hills. We left camp shortly after daybreak the next day, following the Commander's sledge-trails, which led up a creek-bed for several miles and then branched off into the hills. Travelling by sledge and dog-team over an Arctic land was quite an experience for us. Up and down hill, across rolling snow-clad prairies, speeding over the polished surfaces of the many mirror-like lakes, making *détours* here and there to avoid dangerous cut banks and ridges of rock—such was my first 'mush' in the 'north country.'

Although the hunting-camp was only a matter of about twelve miles inland, we did not get there until nearly dark. Our dogs scented the camp long before we saw it, and this made them pull all the harder. The last five hundred yards were made at racing speed, and we landed all in a mix-up in the middle of Pikalu's camp. We crashed into a wind-break of snow-blocks in front of his tent door and sent the snow flying in all directions. Then our dogs got into a general fight among themselves and with Pikalu's team, and we had quite a time separating them. But Pikalu and his pleasant-faced little wife helped us to unhitch our team and chain the dogs up. Then, while Pikalu chopped up

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some frozen meat for dog-feed, his wife went into the tent and prepared supper for her two famished guests. I shall not forget that 'feed.' Fat ribs of bull caribou! This was not the first time I had eaten caribou, but on the ship our cook had so seasoned it that it was impossible to tell it from any other kind of meat. But Pussimirk simply put the fat ribs into a kettle of cold water and brought it to a boil. Then she dished them out on a large tin platter and we ate with our knives, licked our fingers afterward, and drank huge quantities of rich broth. Pussimirk had made tea and they had some crackers, but Martin and I had so filled up on the caribou-meat that we hadn't room for anything else.

The next morning at daylight we looked over the slain. There were twenty-five caribou and, yes, our lily-handed Commander had killed his share of them. The future began to look less—hungry! We loaded our sledge with meat and set off for home.

Since we had been forced to winter at Armstrong Point on Victoria Island, the Commander decided to send Storkerson to survey the remaining unmapped portions of its north-east coast. For this work Storkerson recruited Herman Kilian, Charlie, and me. We were delighted to go with him. Storkerson is one of those men you like at first sight—by this time we called him 'Storkie'; and for Charlie and me this was the first long sledge trip of our lives. He and I were to haul provisions to the north coast and then return, leaving Storkie and Herman to make the survey.

On the morning of October 10 we set out, Storkie in the lead, running ahead of the dogs. He ran for ten miles without once stopping. By this time my legs were pretty weary and I wondered if the romance and glamour of exploring were not beginning to wear off. But happily Storkie stopped and we erected a shelter in the lee of one of the sledges, where he got out his little Primus stove and made a fine pot of hot tea, and we ate some biscuits and had a smoke. After resting about an hour we set out again, Storkie running ahead as before. He kept this up

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for another ten miles, and by that time I had concluded that exploring was not what it was cracked up to be. Never in all my life have I been so tired. I had barely the strength to help pitch our tent and feed the dogs.

When we got into the tent we found it warm and cosy. Herman had supper ready. We ate with voracious appetites, consuming the entire contents of a kettleful of a mysterious-looking concoction of rice, pemmican, pea-meal, and bacon.

Following Storkie's lead, we took off all our clothes before crawling into our sleeping-bags, which were made of soft deer-skins sewn with sinew thread into long sacks. They looked like overgrown potato-sacks. We nestled down into the warm fur and soon fell asleep. Toward morning, however, I began to feel cold, and lay shivering until the stove was lighted. Storkie cooked breakfast while still in his sleeping-bag. He reached his bare arm out of the bag, poured a spoonful of alcohol into the priming-cup of the stove, touched a match to it, and waited for the burner to get hot. Then he pumped up the stove till the flame roared. The roof of our tent was coated with threads of hoar-frost, which fell in the form of snow on top of us as the heat from the Primus reached them. This frost was caused by our breath condensing. The temperature was about eight or ten degrees below zero, but to a tenderfoot it felt like fifty below. After the tent was heated we got out of our bags and dressed. Storkie laughed at our discomforts of the night before and gave us a few hints on arranging the mouths of our sleeping-bags so as to keep out the cold air.

How stiff and sore I was that morning from my twenty miles of running the day before! But I soon got used to it, and it wasn't many days before I could take my turn ahead of the dogs for a twenty-mile spurt.

When we got to the north-west corner of the island we climbed a hill near the beach and saw to the north of us nothing but thin, new ice. This new ice showed us that if the *Polar Bear* had only been able to get clear of the ice in the Prince of Wales Strait in the autumn she would have

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stood a good chance of getting to Melville Island ; and we should have been saved a lot of hard work during the coming winter.

Charlie and I turned back at Hornby Point, which was about eighty miles from home, while Storkie and Herman went on to finish their mapping. With our one sledge and nine dogs we made good time back to the ship. The dogs followed the sledge-tracks, and as we had but a small load we could take turns in riding, and so the return journey was much easier than the outward one. Our only difficulty was at night, for tents are mighty cold propositions in the winter-time. They are as warm as ovens while the fire is going, but without fire they are no warmer than outside ; and during that trip the temperature ranged from twelve to fifteen degrees below zero. I had heard Stefansson tell how very warm and comfortable snow-houses were, but secretly we had our doubts whether a house made of snow could be very comfortable. Anyhow, Charlie and I didn't know how to build them.

Four days after leaving Storkie we arrived at the ship without mishap on November 2, and found every one well and in good spirits. Stefansson had just returned from a visit to his old friends, the 'Blond' Eskimos of Minto Inlet (about ninety miles south of our winter quarters). Captain Gonzales, we learned, had left on the morning of our arrival, accompanied by Jim Fiji, Pikalu, Palaiyak, and Emiu to pay a visit to these same Eskimos. They were instructed to buy an ethnological collection.

Two Eskimos who had accompanied Stefansson to the *Polar Bear* camp from their village in Minto Inlet returned with Gonzales. Every one in camp was much excited about these Eskimos. They were all marvelling at the very close similarity of the two men who had visited us to Europeans. I was sorry to have missed them.

The house was not nearly so crowded now that nine of its occupants¹ were away on trips. This made Levi's

¹ Stefansson had located Ilun's and Pikalu's families on Ramsay Island, where they were to hunt seal for us.

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work not quite so arduous. Levi was without question the most good-natured man I have ever known. He would do all the cooking for a gang of twenty-five and then spend his spare time in making pies and cakes or other delicacies, all the while singing, whistling, or telling stories.

Our natives were very religious. This under ordinary circumstances would not have been a matter of objection, but their spiritual zeal prompted them to be for ever washing themselves, and some of them would be sure to have a large kettle of ice melting on top of the stove whenever Levi wanted it for cooking. They used to wash their hands and faces before and after each meal and several times in between, for, they said, the missionaries had told them that they must wash their faces in order to be admitted into the Kingdom of Heaven; and, they averred, as the missionaries were recognized authorities on all spiritual matters, they were going to continue washing, no matter what temporary inconvenience they might cause the rest of us.

The result of all this washing, of course, was that the house was continually full of steam, and the wet clothes hanging up all over the place—for the women wore only calico dresses while in the house—made it look like a Chinese laundry. It was no wonder that our Commander didn't enjoy staying in that house. He couldn't afford to scold the natives, as we needed the women to sew clothes for us. They were the most important members of the party, for they made for us the nice warm reindeer-skin coats and mittens and socks, without which we could not have hoped to make our long, cold journeys over the ice. So if they wanted to wash their hands and faces thirty times a day it was wise to let them do it, as long as they had time between washings to do some sewing.

In addition to our other duties at this time we had to take tidal measurements through a hole in the ice of the strait. When the sea freezes in the fall of the year ice first forms along the beach. The spray dashed up on the rocks by the breakers, freezes, forming fantastic figures as wave after wave rolls in, and presently the shore is enamelled

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in ice. Then, as the weather becomes colder, the ice increases in width and thickness and spreads seaward ; and that part nearest the beach freezes solidly to the bottom while the ice offshore moves up and down with the tides. The crack or cleavage between the landfast ice and the moving ice is called the tide-crack. Because sea-ice seldom freezes to a greater depth than seven feet the tide-crack is generally not more than thirty or forty yards offshore, except in places where there are shoals. And at this time of year (November) the sea-ice was only about two feet thick and therefore the tide-crack was right close to the beach.

In order to take the tidal observations we made a hole in the moving ice about thirty yards offshore and pitched a tent over it. We drove a long pole into the sea-bottom, where it stuck in the mud, and nailed a yard-stick along the upper part of the pole so that, as the ice moved up and down with the tide, the change in the level of the water could be seen by a glance at the measuring stick. To keep the water in the hole from freezing we heated the tent with a large blue-flame kerosene stove. We also had a chair and table where we wrote the tidal entries. All hands, with the exception of the Commander, took turns standing watches, and for a month the observations were kept both day and night.

I felt lonesome sometimes in that little tent out on the ice ; not so much so on clear nights when the white strait sparkled under the moon and the smoke of our camp rose against the sky—and I saw that a natural world lay about me. But at this time of the year the sky was usually overcast and the nights black. Then, in the faint, ghostly glimmer of its own radiation, the frozen sea appeared as a sea of cloud. There was a curious sense of insubstantiality about it, as if the only solid place lay under my feet and the whole universe beyond and below were as intangible and fleeting as the breath of dreamers.

Nature, the Incongruous One, has sometimes scant reverence for the moods she evokes. On one such ghostly night I heard a scratching on the tent I looked up from

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my reading. The flap shook and parted. A small white face was thrust through the opening. Two yellow eyes glared in the lantern flame. Sharp teeth attacked the canvas and tore at it. It was an Arctic fox. I threw my book at him, and he vanished. I went outside to see if he was still about. Holding a lantern high, so as to cast its glow some distance, I started to walk round the tent. I saw nothing of the fox and was about to re-enter the tent, when suddenly something bit me in the seat of my trousers and hung on, giving a shake that sent the shivers running up and down my spine. I jumped about ten feet before I realized that the fox I could not find had found me. He released his hold as I swung the lighted lantern toward him. After backing off a little he made at me again. This time I saw him coming and swung the lantern at him. He leaped at it, hung on to the metal rim with his teeth, snarling and shaking it; and then ran off into the darkness. I went back into the tent and waited with my gun. As I had expected the fox returned in a few minutes, and I shot him.

I had heard many stories of 'crazy foxes,' but this was my first experience with one. The common belief is that foxes which act as this one did have gone temporarily insane. No one knows just what causes this occasional madness. The natives say that some years large numbers of crazy foxes come into camp, and then there will be years when there are scarcely any.

Emiu, or Split, our merry little dog-driver, returned to camp on November 4 from Illun's hunting-camp on Ramsay Island. He brought back with him a load of bear-meat and a story.

As mentioned before, Gonzales had been accompanied on his southward trip by two 'Blond' Eskimos. Emiu said that after leaving the camp the captain had begun to ride on the sledge and that the Eskimos, not knowing that the captain considered a native inferior to himself, had seated themselves beside him. Gonzales told them to get off the sledge, but not being able to understand a word of what

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he was saying, they continued to ride. At this Gonzales became angry and overturned the sledge, throwing his two guests off into a snow-bank. Apparently they thought he was playing. They brushed the snow from their clothing, and, laughing, reseated themselves beside him. Gonzales furious with rage, jumped off the sledge and overturned it again, this time hurling the natives on to a patch of hard glare ice. It was now quite clear to the two Eskimos that the captain was not joking. Whether because puzzled, frightened, or angry, Emiu did not know, but they stopped to talk together, allowing the sledges to leave them far behind.

Long after camp was made that evening the two Eskimos made their appearance. They were very reluctant about entering the tent, but finally consented to do so upon the entreaty of Emiu and Pikalu; but evidently thinking that Gonzales might try to murder them, they did not go to sleep, but lay whispering to each other all night long. Next morning they started off alone without sledges, sleeping-bags, or dogs, toward their village, which was a four days' journey away. Emiu told us that Gonzales had gone on after them and was now probably at their village. This might result in serious trouble. Gonzales and his two men were in a mighty doubtful situation, alone in a village of a hundred and fifty hostile natives.

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hard enough and of uniform density, and cut a hole at its base about a foot deep by three feet long and just wide enough for him to stand in. Then, stopping, he outlined with his knife the first block, which was the same length as the hole he was standing in and two feet wide, and cut round it to a depth of eight inches, the desired thickness. With a slight upward kick of the toe of his foot, he released the block; then raised it on edge and lifted it out beside the hole. It looked like a lump of domino sugar for a giant's breakfast coffee-cup. After having cut enough blocks to illustrate his thesis, Stefansson told us to get busy and experiment for ourselves.

We found it was not quite so easy as it looked.

To our chagrin, after working for about an hour, we had accumulated a pile of rough fragments, but very few blocks that could be used for building. After carefully cutting all round the block as the Commander had done, we would kick it, only to see it split into small pieces. Next to the actual building, this kick is the most important trick to be learned. But by the end of the day we had all attained a fair degree of skill.

When we had accumulated enough blocks the Commander chose a level-topped snow-bank as the site for the house, drew a large circle on the surface of the drift, and, standing inside the circle, told us to bring him the blocks. He took each block, set it on edge along the circumference of the circle, and with his long knife shaved off its edges so that it nestled snugly against its neighbour. He placed the blocks so that they leaned slightly inward and joined them on either side, so that they all mutually supported one another. If the reader will take two books and lean them together in the manner described he will readily understand the basic principle upon which snow-houses are built. And he will see why it is that snow-houses cannot fall down if the blocks are joined together at the proper angle.

But to come back to the house the Commander was building. After he had joined together the blocks of the first or bottom tier he started the second tier by cutting



STEFANSSON AND MARTIN KILIAN BUILDING A SNOW-HOUSE



THE LAST BLOCK BUT ONE

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a block diagonally from top to bottom, thus making an incline ending in a perpendicular edge against which to place the first block of the second tier. He built the second tier spirally along this incline, tilting its blocks inward slightly more than the bottom ones.

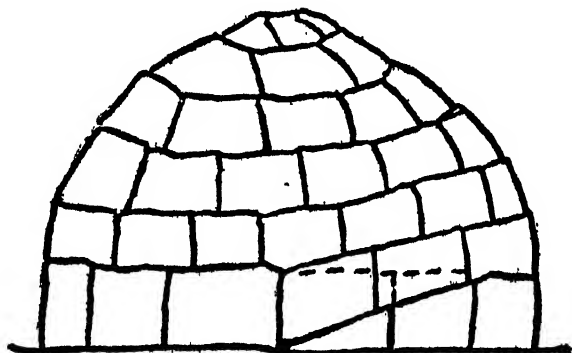


DIAGRAM TO ILLUSTRATE THE METHOD FOLLOWED IN BUILDING
A SNOW-HOUSE

From Vilhjalmur Stefansson's *Hunters of the Great North*

As the house was circular, with each tier of blocks curving inward at a greater slant than the one below, it gradually assumed a dome shape, the opening in the centre becoming smaller and smaller with the completion of each tier. At last the hole in the roof was so small that the Commander could close it by shoving up through it two blocks of snow and turning them crosswise. He then cut away their corners and bevelled them so that they fitted down snugly. This completed the most arduous part of his work. He told us to plaster up the cracks and crevices with soft snow, and then instructed us in digging through the drift at one side of the house. From the alleyway we cut a door, just high enough to admit a man crawling on his hands and knees, through to the interior. The Commander was at work shovelling snow from the doorway and tossing it back to the rear half of the house, where he promptly massed it into a platform about three feet high, extending across the

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room. This he called the bed-platform, and said we should use similar beds in the houses we were to build when on trail.

The white men of our party looked on admiringly as the symmetrical snow-house took shape, but their amazement was mild compared with that of our Eskimos. I learned now for the first time that none of our natives had ever built a snow-house, and that this one was the first most of them had seen. It certainly opened my eyes to find that a white man could go into an Eskimo country and teach some of its people the very art in which they are commonly believed to excel. The conversation resulting from the building of the snow-house brought out the interesting facts, first, that the Eskimos inhabiting the north and east coasts of Siberia and the various coasts of Alaska do not know how to build snow-houses, and so far as we have any record never have known how; second, that those Eskimos living on the north coast of Canada, between Herschel Island on the west and Cape Bexley on the east, also do not build them. The Commander told us that formerly these last-named did occasionally build snow-houses, but that the art has been lost (due to an influx of western natives and ideas).

We know from accounts of travellers in South Greenland and Labrador and various other districts settled by the Eskimos that most of their inhabitants have long ago discontinued building snow-houses—if they ever did.

So of the various Eskimo peoples there remain only those living on the shores of Coronation Gulf, Victoria Island, Hudson Bay country, and North Greenland who can be said to build snow-houses. To one familiar with the statistics on Eskimo population it will be readily seen from the above that of a total population of about thirty thousand, less than one-third are familiar with the art of snow-house building.

We heated our snow-house with a blue-flame kerosene stove and covered the bed-platform with several thicknesses of caribou-skins. It was so much lighter than our wood-

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house that the Eskimo women used it as a sewing-room. I said to Charlie that night that maybe Gonzales and Seymour were right when they said so scornfully that Stefansson couldn't sharpen his own knife, but at least he could build a snow-house and could kill caribou.

Hitherto all the Commander's actions had only served to confirm my early impressions. I still regarded him as a cold, impassive scientist, whose keen mind, machine-like in its precision, like a machine had no spark of the human. Now, however, that we were about to set out together on a long sledge journey, I began to detect a lessening of the degree of aloofness with which he had formerly treated me. Then something happened.

It was while Martin Kilian and I were loading the sledge on the morning we were to set out for Cape Kellett. The Commander came out from the house to superintend the job. Split and some of the men were harnessing the dogs to the sledge when one dog ran away. A man—I have forgotten who—cursing and waving a heavy whip, set out in pursuit. But the dog, a big, black, handsome fellow, kept just out of reach until the man was out of breath; then, at a safe distance, sat down on his haunches and looked wisely at his infuriated pursuer. The Commander, noticing this, told the man to leave the dog alone, while he himself went forward, calling the dog by name. No sooner did the animal hear his voice than he came bounding up to him and stood still, wagging his long black, bushy tail to indicate his pleasure. The Commander patted him on the head and then turned back toward us. The dog followed obediently at his heels, and, when the Commander took up the dog-harness, put his head knowingly into the collar. Stefansson looked for a moment as pleased and triumphant as a boy at his little victory over the man with the whip. For the first time since I had seen him I began to like him.

CHAPTER VII

ALL was now ready for the start. The Commander gave the signal and little Split bounded off ahead. Martin and the Commander, who had the first sledge, shook it loose from the snow, their dogs strained forward at the command, "Mush up, boys!" and off they went after Split. My dogs were wildly excited, and one shake of the handlebars was enough to liberate my sledge. We were off for Banks Island!

In about three days we expected to make Illun's camp, where we hoped to hear news of Gonzales, as the camp was only a day's journey from the 'Blond' Eskimos' village. If Gonzales had been murdered it would be necessary to send word back to the *Polar Bear* not to allow any natives to come near.

As we pitched camp at the end of the second day out, who should come up but Gonzales himself, with Jim Fiji and his two Eskimos, Palaiyak and Pikalu. He had a brave story to tell.

He had reached the village, comprising about forty snow-houses, in the afternoon. As he drew near all the dogs in camp rushed to meet him, snarling and barking. While Jim and his Eskimos beat them off from his team Gonzales watched a man come out of one of the houses and then run the round of the others, calling into the alleyways. He saw stooping figures scooting out of the alleys, men with knives in their hands. They gathered in groups, apparently consulting with one another, but none of them approached him. He recognized the two men whom he had offended; they scowled darkly at him. All the typical marks of Eskimo goodwill were withheld. They offered him neither food nor lodging. They stood their distance and accepted

his greeting in ominous silence. Then they went indoors. Near at hand was a deserted snow-house, and Gonzales put his camping gear inside and spread out his bed-skins. His two Eskimos were frightened. Pikalu said that the villagers had gone indoors to discuss whether they should kill him or not, and that it would be wise for Gonzales not to wait till they reached a decision. Pikalu's advice was, in short, the Eskimo equivalent of "Let's go while the going is good."

Gonzales refused. He realized that with so many dogs about he could not sneak from the place. If the villagers had resolved to kill him they would follow—and they outnumbered his party twenty to one. Furthermore, our dusky Portuguese had his own kind of courage and pride. He despised natives, and he would not run from them. Also, if the worst came to the worst, he had rifles and they had none. He would make some havoc before they got him!

But—here he reminded us magnificently—he had gone there to trade and he was first of all a man who carried out orders at whatever hazard. Therefore he persuaded Pikalu and Palaiyak, who were personally not in bad odour with the villagers, to go among them and invite them to view his pack of goods. Meanwhile he opened the pack, rolled out scarlet cloth, displayed bright pans and pots, beads and knives. His ruse was successful; curiosity triumphed; the villagers poured out and crowded about the sledge. Now the only white man who had ever visited their village before was Stefansson, and he had brought only a small pack. They had never seen such things in their lives as Gonzales disclosed to their wondering gaze. Their eyes almost popped out of their heads; they went wild with excitement. They seized the various articles and passed them from hand to hand; then some one on the edge of the crowd would run off with them. They soon emptied the sledge. Then, because there were not enough of these rare and lovely things to go round, they strove with one another for possession. Pots, saws, red cloth,

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and fur boots all in a *mêlée* on the snow! Fortunately it did not occur to the natives to break up the sledge for souvenirs.

Night fell. Gonzales retired within the snow-house. At first he thought of going out with a rifle and scaring the villagers into returning his goods. His Eskimos persuaded him against this suicidal move. Instead, they would go among the natives again and tell them that Gonzales was a very powerful *shaman* who would certainly bring dread disease, famine, or other calamity upon them unless they paid for the goods.

Presently Gonzales looked up from the wood-alcohol lamp over which he was cooking his supper and saw staring faces, barely distinguishable in the dim light, massed in his doorway. The natives had crept in over the snow that silenced all sound of their approach; they filled the alleyway. Then suddenly *they* saw something. Gonzales rose up in the shadows. His waving hands burned with an unearthly blue fire. He thrust his blazing fingers into his mouth and breathed out gusts of flame. The natives fled headlong.

The old conjuring trick of dipping the fingers in alcohol and lighting them had worked for the moment. The question was, would it continue to work? Conjuring has its perils, for the leading village *shamans* are very jealous of their art and their power and do not take kindly to rival performers.

Gonzales spent an anxious night. Occasionally he went to the door and looked out. The outlines of the snow-houses were merged in their white background, but the ice windows gleamed. Through the night the gleams of the single windows in the dwellings went out; but the windows of the *kadjigi*, or council house, continued to glow. The men of the village with their *shamans* were conferring as to his fate. Morning would bring action. If his fire-eating trick, and the tales of Pikalu and Paláiyak, had failed, there would be nothing for it but a fight.

It was with no small relief that Gonzales, next morning,

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saw the women and children coming toward him with the men. The wise heads of the village had come to the conclusion that, while their treatment of him was justified, yet because the powers of the white man's spirits were many and evil, it would be more politic to pay for the goods.

Some brought deer-skins, others bows and arrows, some caribou-meat, boots, slippers, socks, dry fish, frozen fish, etc., until there was a pile so large and heavy that it was more than the captain could carry on his sledge. But he must have taken most of it, for when we met him his load was piled shoulder-high and it looked as if he had looted the village. The fish he carried were huge, some weighing in the neighbourhood of sixty pounds and resembling sticks of cordwood piled crosswise on the sledge. Although the load was heavy and bulky its value was not equal to that of the stolen goods, for the people had brought what they wanted to give, and some who had stolen valuable articles brought only deer-sinew or something else of little value in exchange. All things considered, however, Gonzales was well pleased at the way things had turned out; and so was the Commander. Gonzales had shown both courage and craft; he had won out; and his manifest admiration for the hero of the tale he told did not diminish ours. In fact, it added an enviable touch of barbaric picturesqueness. I wish I could tell it so well!

The reader may wonder why, on receipt of Split's news, we had not at once sent a party to rescue Gonzales. It was a five days' journey from the *Bear*. Eskimos are much too impulsive to take prisoners. Gonzales was either dead before Split reached us, or he was all right. If the Eskimos had killed him and his men, then they would look upon the rescuers as avengers and attack them without parley; and thereafter all white men who came their way would be in danger. We had not been sent north to kill natives. An episode of that nature would probably make our planned work in the Arctic impossible. There was nothing to do but wait and trust that Gonzales had extricated himself from his predicament. Set it down, if you must, to that

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ruthlessness of the North ' so much harped on in fiction—that a man must look out for himself up there, must rely on his own intelligence, initiative, and courage. That is inevitable—and furthermore it is good common sense—in the North.

Gonzales proceeded north to his ship and we travelled down the strait to Ramsay Island, where Illun and Pikalu had their hunting-camp. They had a roaring fire in their little sheet-iron stove, and Pussimirk, Pikalu's hospitable little wife, made some mukpauraks and tea for us and we had a great time sitting round the camp-stove swapping yarns. Mukpauraks, by the way, are singular-looking concoctions; a kind of doughnut made out of flour and baking-powder and water and fried in seal- or other oil. They look pretty good to a hungry man, and taste even better than they look.

As the Commander was rather worried by the story which Gonzales told about the stealing, he sent Split to the native camp to tell them that when they came to visit the expedition they must never come in groups of more than ten. Split returned the next day, bringing with him an old man. This old man told of sickness and food shortage in the village and expressed regret for the treatment given Gonzales. He promised that if Stefansson would only recall the curse he had sent the people would never steal from us again. He then gave Stefansson the presents he had brought. The Commander accepted them and told the old man that he had caused the people to become ill because Gonzales had greatly exaggerated the story of the thievery, and when he first heard it he had become so angry that he had punished them. But now, if the old man had spoken the truth, the curse would be lifted gradually and the people would slowly recover. But this must be a warning never to illtreat any other travellers who should happen their way.

It was now nearly the last of November and the days were short and rather dark. There was no moon, and we decided to wait for its reappearance before starting out

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again. We stayed at Illun's about a week and had a very good time. The Eskimos were always laughing and joking. All these western Eskimos could speak a little broken English and so we got along very well. Stefansson could speak like a native, but Martin and I could not understand a word unless the natives spoke to us in the whaler's jargon¹ which is easy to learn. This jargon is a mixture of Eskimo, English, Portuguese, and South Sea Island words, and has been evolved by the whalers in their many years of association with the natives. It corresponds to pidgin-English and is sufficient for all ordinary purposes of intercourse, but no fine shades of meaning can be expressed by it.

At last the moon appeared and we started west across the strait, which is about thirty miles wide at this point. We saw black streaks in the clouded sky to the south, and the Commander said that this was what is called water-sky. Where there is open water the clouds above reflect its black colour, and the traveller can tell merely by looking at the sky whether there is any open water within a given distance. Similarly, when one is approaching land the sky reflects the dark hue of the land and one can even trace roughly by the sky colouring the presence of long points or of deep bays. The closer one is to the water or land the higher above the horizon is the watersky. If the open water is fifteen or twenty miles away the black streaks appear on the distant horizon only.

A slight, fair wind was blowing, which was welcome as we found it warm work running beside the sledges in our fur clothing. It was just getting dark on the second day out when we reached the mouth of a creek on the east coast of Banks Island. There we found several old snow-houses

¹ This jargon must not be confused with the Eskimo language (one of the agglutinatives or more nearly polysynthetic), which is one of the most difficult to learn. While space cannot be given here for more than a very brief statement, some idea of its complexity may be gained by the fact that the average Eskimo uses a daily vocabulary of at least ten thousand words, and that any verb may be modified in at least fifty thousand different ways. To any root word verbal or nominative endings may be affixed, thus subjecting the root to all the complicated endings of the inflexional system (as in Latin or Greek).

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which had been built in the autumn by some natives who had spent the previous summer on Banks Island and had stopped there on their way east to the settlement at Minto Inlet. We walked round inspecting these old houses. They were not very prepossessing; in fact, they did not resemble houses at all. They looked more nearly like heaps of snow, each with a cup-shaped depression in the top, caused by the roof having sagged in until it touched the bed-platform. One of the houses was not quite so bad. Its roof had sagged to within about two feet of the floor, leaving a space large enough for sleeping round the sides. The Commander told us that this house would be very cold and almost impossible to warm up.¹ We all voted, therefore, for building a house of our own out of new snow, which promised us a comfortable night in return for an hour's extra work.

Accordingly, we started cutting blocks. The snow, very soft and rather sticky, was readily cut. When about fifty blocks were ready, Stefansson started to build, while I carried the blocks to him. He would slap one into place, swing his knife, lop off a projecting corner, and then be ready for the next. It kept me on the run to supply him with blocks. Martin was kept busy plastering the cracks between the blocks, while Split cut more blocks to build with. We had that house finished in a jiffy.

We spread our caribou-skins on the bed-platform, one thickness with the hair side downward and the other with the hair side up. We made a little snow table for the grub-box to stand on at one side of the space in front of the bed-platform, and put the Primus stove box on the other side.

I do not think there was any other subject on which the Commander cautioned us so often as on that of keeping our clothing dry. In order to drill it into us, he did all the inside work at camping-time. This consisted of beating the snow out of the bed-skins and receiving the gear passed

¹The interior of an old snow-house is always crusted with ice and therefore very difficult to heat.

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into him from outside. After all our gear—sleeping-bags, spare clothing, box containing writing materials, etc.—had been put in place he would light the Primus stove.

While the Commander was doing this we would unharness the dogs, hitch each to his ring on the long dog-line we carried for that purpose, and feed them. If the weather was cold and there was a wind we would either put up two blocks of snow to protect each dog, or dig a hole in the snow beside him. We would also bank up the base of the house with a two-foot insulation of snow.

The first man to go inside would immediately remove his outer coat and pass it out through the low door to his companions, who would beat all the loose snow out of it and then pass it back inside. By this time the owner of the coat would have removed his outer trousers and would have beaten the snow from them and from his mittens as well. He would then remove his boots and duffles, beating the snow or hoar-frost out of these also. Then boots, mittens, duffles, etc., would all be put where they would not thaw, either on the floor, which was about three feet below the level of the bed-platform, or on top of the snow platform underneath the bed-skins, where the temperature is always below freezing. The last man to come in had to beat out his own coat, but as we all took turns at this it did not mean any special inconvenience for any one man. Upon entering, we would find the Commander sitting on the bed-platform in front of the Primus stove, making chocolate stew—a mixture of rice, chocolate, powdered milk, raisins, butter, sugar, and water. It supplied both food and drink in one pot, thereby doing away with the necessity for making some such drink as tea. The soup was made thin and we drank it from huge mugs. The rice and other solids settled to the bottom and were eaten with a spoon. The thin part of the stew was a little thicker than ordinary chocolate and more delicious.

I suspect that the real reason for the Commander's doing the inside work on this particular trip was that he wanted to keep an eye on us. If we didn't beat out every particle

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of snow from our boots or trousers or mittens he was sure to notice it and tell us that the snow would soon melt, causing our clothes to become wet. As we had no adequate method for drying them (or rather, as we could not afford to use our fuel for that purpose), it was of the utmost importance to keep them dry by preventing any moisture from forming in them. This is one of the most important rules in the technique of travelling, and by the time we had arrived at our destination we had mastered it, thanks to Stefansson's patience.

As I have said, the snow out of which we had built our house was exceptionally soft. The Commander had remarked more than once during the building that he did not feel sure that the blocks would stand their own weight. We had just finished eating our chocolate stew and were writing up our diaries, when we noticed that the house seemed to be lower than it had been before supper. Examination showed that our roof was no longer dome-shaped, but flat. Even as we looked we could see it slowly descending like the ceiling in an Edgar Allan Poe story. We propped it up by making a pillar out of our boxes, but this did no good. The snow was so soft and the temperature so mild that the roof was thawing and the boxes simply punched their way through as it came down. We lost no time in putting on our clothes and removing our camp gear ; but, with all our haste, the centre of the roof became so low that in order to remove the last of our belongings we had to wriggle out on our stomachs.

We were now in a mighty unpleasant situation. The weather had not been bad during the day and while we had been building our snow-house, but now a blizzard was howling. Our lantern blew out, leaving us in total darkness. Clouds of drifting snow whirled about us as we floundered around in search of the deserted Eskimo house. We finally found it and managed to cut a passage through to the interior. The roof of this house had apparently started to cave in on the Eskimos, just as our house had on us, and the people must have abandoned it as we had ours. As

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soon as they had extinguished their lamp the thawing interior of the house had frozen solid, thereby cementing the blocks of which it was composed into a united whole, arresting further sagging. The roof now was about two feet high in the centre and about three feet high near the walls. It looked solid, but we didn't care to take any chances, so we propped it up with a column made out of our boxes. We passed our sleeping gear inside and the Commander again beat as much snow out of it as he could in such cramped quarters. We then crawled in and removed our outer coats, which we had donned when the other house started to cave in. The Commander lighted the Primus, but, as he had foretold, the icy house did not get appreciably warmer. We crawled into our bags and slept in a circle round the edge of the bed-platform, the roof being too low for us to occupy the centre.

Much to Stefansson's disgust, when we woke up in the morning we found our sleeping-bags soaking wet wherever they had come in contact with the snow walls. He certainly came near being a crank on the subject of keeping one's clothing dry on polar exploration. On that point he had little charity for explorers we read of in books about the North, who were always soaking wet and always telling what a hardship it was to be wet. Our wetting was not serious this time as only the outside of the bags were damp. We were instructed to sleep the next night with the wettest side of our bags over us—which we did, and had them fairly dry in two days.

The wind had quieted down to a gentle breeze and we were glad to leave our uncomfortable, but, under the circumstances, welcome house.

CHAPTER VIII

THERE was a frozen-up creek leading west into the interior of Banks Island which we followed for a few miles, but the snow was so deep and soft that the sledges sank up to the benches, and we had to work like Trojans helping the dogs pull the loads. After a day of this the Commander decided to abandon the creek and strike directly across country, hoping for easier going. Sometimes we ran into stony ground and had to make long *détours* to avoid the rocky ridges, but on the whole we got along fairly well. The weather, which had up to this time been uniformly mild, now turned cold, the temperature dropping to 40° below zero, but as there was little wind and we were dressed warmly we did not suffer any inconvenience while on the trail. However, we found we had to keep busy at camping-time or we felt cold.

No matter how much we may appreciate a joke against ourselves, we can never muster up the courage to let others laugh at us unless we have first the shielding insulation of time. We like to look back and say, "Such was the folly of my youth," and I suppose I am just like the rest. Anyhow, here is the story I now tell of the way I learned how really comfortable a snow-house is.

Up to this time my opinion of snow-houses had not been very favourable. It is true that the house we built at the base-camp had been considered by the women warm enough for a sewing-room, but none of us white men had ever spent more than a few minutes inside of it, and then only when dressed in our out-of-door clothing. We thought the women liked it because they were Eskimos and used to the cold. The house we had built upon crossing the strait to Banks Island had seemed warm during the few minutes we

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supper," and I pointed to the spilt stew that was now a frozen mass on the floor.

"Yes, but Noice, that is down on the floor where the temperature is about thirty or forty degrees below zero. Up here where we are sitting it is probably in the neighbourhood of fifty degrees above zero. You see, Noice, the principle of a snow-house is the same as that of the diving-bell. This house is practically airtight. We have cooked supper and the stove has warmed up the air inside, and as cold air is heavier than hot air, and as we are sitting up high on this platform in the layer of warm air, and as the door is below us, thereby cutting off any way of escape for the warm air, it is logically impossible that this house can be cold. You notice I am sitting here in my shirt-sleeves and I feel perfectly comfortable."

"I have to admit, Mr Stefansson, that your argument seems all right. But if you are not cold it is because you have become hardened to snow-houses and don't notice it. It *is* cold. Seeing is believing. Just look at the walls and the roof and see that scum of hoar-frost. Do you think that frost would be there if the temperature inside this house were anywhere near fifty degrees above zero?"

"My dear boy, I do not think; I know. And just to prove to you how imaginative you are I am going to give you a little demonstration." And he quickly put on his boots, went outside, and returned with the thermometer. He placed it on the floor in the alleyway. After a short while he said, "Take a look now, Noice, and see how cold it is."

I looked. The thermometer registered 38° below zero. Well, hadn't I said it was cold? And there were the figures to prove it!

"Now, Noice, let us see how cold it is up here."

The Commander leaned over the edge of the bed-platform, reached down, picked the instrument off the floor and placed it on top of his stationery-box, which was on a level with the platform on which we were sitting. At first there was not much change. Then the thermometer commenced

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to 'sweat,' drops of water forming all over it. The mercury rose to zero, and finally stopped at the freezing-point. Then the Commander raised the thermometer higher, suspending it at about the level of our heads as we sat there on the bed. The mercury continued to mount, not stopping until it had reached 45° above zero. 45° above zero in a snow-house! I must have looked rather foolish, but I felt a good deal warmer than I had a few minutes before. If it hadn't been for that thermometer I don't think even the Commander's sound logic could have kept me from shivering. As it was, I began to see how large a part the imagination plays in one's comfort. I cannot help thinking how different my memories of that trip would be if we hadn't had a thermometer. From that day life in the snow-houses took on a different aspect. I found them warm, cosy, and comfortable, and I look back with fond memories on the many pleasant evenings I have spent in them.

It was during the evenings in these snow-houses that I found out that Stefansson was not quite so inhuman as people said he was. This was brought home to me quite forcefully one night. We had had a difficult day—soft snow in the creek-beds and rocky ridges out of them, and so were unusually tired when we built the house that night. After supper we had undressed and crawled into our bags, where we lay on our backs, our clothing rolled up underneath our heads for pillows. We were feeling rather despondent, just as one does sometimes feel when fatigued, when the Commander, without any introductory remarks, started to recite "Fuzzy Wuzzy," then went on to "Gentlemen rankers out on a spree, Damned from here to eternity," and then startled and captivated us still more by saying that he had once written poetry himself, and forthwith proceeded to recite one of his own compositions. It had to do with the troubles of himself and his classmates when at college and living in a boarding-house, where they were fed on roast beef on Monday, braised beef on Tuesday, meat-pie for Wednesday, and hash on Thursday; each stanza,

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and there were about twenty of them, ended up with "Hash, hash, hash."

The whole thing came so unexpectedly. We had never dreamed that the Commander had even a spark of humour—let alone the ability to concoct such ridiculously funny doggerel as his "Hash." Literally, he took our breath away. Even now I can never think of that episode without a chuckle—the picture of us bundled up in our sleeping-bags like so many grotesque, straight-jacketed corpses, and Stefansson, with his solemn, owl-like face, reciting "Hash, hash, hash."

I had both heard and read a lot about the awful silence of the North and the darkness of the long Arctic night. It was now the 6th of December, and here on Banks Island we were three hundred miles north of the Arctic Circle. Now or never the perpetual darkness should appear, but we saw none of it. Every day there were at least five hours of light that was sufficient for travelling purposes. We did not see the sun itself, but it tinted the sky a beautiful red and pink as it circled round from east to west just below the southern horizon.

As to the continuous, deathlike silence, it really isn't there. In summer when navigating through the ice-fields there is the bumping and crashing of the boat against the ice, and cakes of ice are constantly overturning with a splash that can be heard for miles. Then there is the noise of innumerable birds—loons, ducks, swans, gulls, cranes, all trying to talk at once. In winter the birds are gone, with the exception of the squawky ptarmigan and a few owls, but there is the almost continuous cracking of the ice and land whenever there is a change in temperature. This is especially noticeable when travelling overland. The ice of the lakes makes a terrible racket when it commences to expand, sounding very much like rifle-fire. No, just 90 per cent. of the silence we read about isn't there. And for that very reason we always noticed particularly the few silent days or nights we did have.

I well remember one such night, because it introduced

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ne to one of the most beautiful pictures I have ever seen. We had crossed the divide separating the rivers which run into the Beaufort Sea from those running east and south into De Salis Bay and Prince of Wales Strait, and had entered a broad valley containing a chain of small lakes and sloughy lagoons. The grass was so luxuriant that huge clumps of it projected here and there above the snow, which lay shimmering over the face of the moon-flooded valley. The great round, silver ball was just lifting its ponderous bulk over the top of a cliff, casting the rugged, hunchback outlines of rock, with their long trains of deep purple shadows, into bold relief. Before us the valley stretched westward to the sea, its many lakes and crooked, boulder-strewn river glittering like polished steel. Not a sound broke upon the calm beauty of the scene, not a breeze stirred, and our breath went up into the keen, crisp night air like clouds of smoke.

It was just thirty miles, by our reckoning, from our last snow-house to the sea-coast. We made it in six hours. An hour later we were enjoying the comfort of another of our cosy dwellings, and writing up our diaries; for in that short time we had built our house, unharnessed and fed the dogs, and cooked supper. We never bothered to wash the few dishes we had, for each of us had a special trade-mark on his mug and plate that distinguished it from the others.

Day dawned slowly. A pink flush crept down our beautiful valley, tinging its white loveliness. Far inland, backed against the blushing sky, ranged the black, uneven cliffs. On our doorstep slept the Beaufort Sea. The Beaufort Sea! I remembered it as I had first seen it four months ago—when, with our bows slashing and frothing through its green waves, all canvas set, the lee sail awash, and men in dripping oilskins massed on our glistening black decks, we had sighted a lone man on this selfsame coast. The excitement of that moment surged over me again.

Now the Beaufort Sea lay still under five feet of ice,

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smooth and white like a marble floor, vast as the Gobi Desert. How safe and strong it looked! How insidiously treacherous it was! The Commander told us that a sudden gale would turn this peaceful scene into one of deafening havoc; that this seemingly solid expanse of ice would break into a million pieces, a million restless ice-floes grinding, overturning, buckling into chaotic pressure-ridges. There is small chance for the man who gets caught in a gale while out on such ice. The Commander said that one should never camp on sea-ice which is not at least fifteen feet thick. He told us that on his ice trips he had often been forced to travel for miles and miles before he could find an ice-floe which was safe enough for a camp-site. There is not so much danger when one is travelling during the day, for then it is easy to manoeuvre from floe to floe but at night, when the sledges are unloaded and the dogs unharnessed, it is not very pleasant to have an ice-crack open up, perhaps in the very centre of your camp, while you are sleeping, and have the crack widen out, leaving your outfit scattered about on both sides of an open lead.

We still had fifty miles to go. The weather remained cold and calm. Seaward, the ice was suffused by a delicate pinkish glow from the hidden sun, which, like a mischievous child, tried to peep over the brim of the horizon to see what we were doing.

The day was so perfect that we determined not to stop until we reached Kellett. We could afford to make a long march and run the risk of getting our clothing wet from perspiration, because we knew that we could dry it at the big camp without much trouble. Whenever the wind blows from the land the ice west of Banks Island melts offshore, and as we were not prepared for crossing leads we travelled on the landfast ice near the beach. All day long we journeyed, little Split running ahead of the dogs. Occasionally, when the dogs flagged, he would lie down flat on his stomach and play seal to get them excited, and then when they had nearly pounced upon him, up he would bound like a jack-in-the-box and race on ahead again.

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Gradually daylight faded and night came on ; night, and the aurora borealis. Long, slender lines of pale green, like scintillating draperies hung across the heavens, and the stars and moon seemed to play hide-and-seek between their folds. And on we sped beneath it all.

Dry snow sounded *crunch, crunch, crunch* under our footsteps ; and with the noise of sledges scraping over tops of hard snowdrifts, and the shouts of encouragement to the dogs, hour after hour passed, till the dogs began to slow up. But when we reached the vicinity of Kellett we ran into fresh sledge-tracks that apparently had been made by hunting-parties from the camp. Then the dogs forgot all about being tired. They livened up like old war-horses at the sound of the bugle-call, and, eyes flashing, tails up, away they trotted, sniffing the fresh trail and congratulating themselves, for they as well as we knew that there were people close by.

An hour later, at 1 A.M., we saw a light ahead—the window of Captain Bernard's house, and in a few minutes we drove up. Bernard and his men came running out to meet us, for their dogs, hearing us coming, had given the alarm with long-drawn-out howls and sharp, staccato barks.

The captain helped us unhitch our dogs, told his men to give them a big feed, and then ushered us into his warm, well-appointed winter house.

CHAPTER IX

CAPTAIN PETER BERNARD had a comfortable house, far superior to the *Polar Bear* camp on Victoria Island. Pete was a relative of Joe Bernard, a renowned man too in the North. Both were French Canadians born on Prince Edward's Island, where they grew up chiefly in a little fishing-smack. Both drifted to the Pacific Coast and north to Nome, where they arrived in time to take part in the excitement of the gold stampede. Joe had then bought a little trading schooner and had made numerous voyages to distant parts of the Arctic. Pete had prospected, mined, and carried the United States mail by dog-team from Nome to various interior towns of Alaska. But during his earlier life he had so grown to love the sea that he never felt entirely at home when separated from it. So when he had saved enough money he bought the schooner *Mary Sachs*, which he had sailed ever since, trading and freighting in Alaskan and Siberian waters. Stefansson had engaged Pete and his boat at Nome in 1913, and both had been in his service ever since. He had volunteered his assistance when Stefansson was finding it difficult to get men to accompany him on his first ice trip, and had been accepted; but when only one day out from land he had slipped and cut such a gash in his forehead that he had had a narrow escape from death, and his companions had carried him back to land.

Bernard had subsequently sailed his ship to Kellett, where he had been since 1914. He was fifty-eight years old, grey-headed, short, heavy-set, muscular. He was always the first up in the morning and the last to bed at night, working continually at something or other, building sledges, at which he was an expert, sewing dog-harnesses, mending sails, etc.

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An excellent host and a good cook, he found time in the evenings to play a worn-out phonograph, indulge in a lively game of poker, or sit and spin yarns.

Bernard's other white companions were Lorne Knight, the Seattle boy who had sailed north with me on the *Polar Bear*, and Charles Thomsen, a slim, wiry man in his early thirties, a Norwegian sailor, who had spent some time gold-mining and trapping in the Nome country, and who had brought with him his Eskimo wife and family. I have called Knight a 'boy.' In years he was, being about my age, but not in physique. He was possibly something under six feet tall; the lack of an inch or two in height was more than compensated for by his bulk. He had the biggest arms, calves, and neck I have ever seen; he must have weighed over two hundred pounds, and he was as jolly as he was huge.

The day after we arrived the Commander sent Thomsen and Split north to the *Star*, with instructions to Wilkins and Castel to come down and spend Christmas with us and talk over plans for the coming year's work. Owing to bad weather their party did not join us until New Year's Day, but when they came they put a lot of life into our New Year's party. Both were born adventurers, happy-go-lucky chaps, who had trotted about all over the world. Wilkins was tall, fair, and about twenty-eight. He was one of those who never stand on ceremony. He liked to sing and dance and tell funny stories. Born and reared in Australia, he had served as war-correspondent during one of the Balkan campaigns, and had the distinction of making one of the first moving pictures of an actual battle. He had joined Stefansson in 1913 and was on the *Karluk* when she was caught in the ice. Although originally only the photographer of the expedition he had so impressed the Commander by his quick adaptability to Arctic conditions, and by his efficient management of anything entrusted to him, that he had been promoted to the position of second-in-command of the northern party.

Castel was thirty-eight years old, a little blue-eyed Hollander, who, after graduating from a naval academy, had

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entered upon a roving life on the high seas. There was scarcely a country he had not visited before he had turned his attention to the Arctic, where he had now been since 1906. He had joined our expedition in 1914, had taken part in the Commander's first ice trip, and had then sailed the *North Star* to Banks Island.

Captain Bernard had been prevented by bad weather from doing much hunting, but that did not prevent him from serving a rich New Year's feast. He dished up a young wolf, that had been caught in a trap, with a spicy dressing and currant jelly, French peas and sweet potatoes; for dessert he gave us mince-pie made of chopped caribou-meat, caribou-suet, raisins, and dried apples. He had even a bottle of brandy and a box of cigars. We played the phonograph, sang songs, and had a good time generally. I made a couple of batches of fudge, and the Commander, who does not use tobacco or liquor, celebrated with the fudge.

The Commander had decided not to return to the *Polar Bear*, but to go north instead to the *Star* base, where he intended to write folklore stories from the dictation of the Eskimos employed by the expedition. He would also start the work of preparing for the spring trip. Thomsen, Knight, and I were to return to the *Polar Bear* with a letter instructing Storkerson to complete preparations for his part of the coming year's programme. He was to come west round the north end of Banks Island and make an ice trip north-west from Cape Alfred. The Commander himself would go north-east to complete the exploration of the land he had discovered the previous year. He would probably meet Storkerson at or near Mercy Bay, Banks Island, which is about half-way between the two bases, before he struck north for the New Land. He expected to leave Alfred at about the same time that Storkerson would leave the *Polar Bear*.

The 5th of January was the day set for our departure from Kellett. We had reason to remember that date.

It was still dark when Thomsen, Knight, and I, with two sledges, left the house at 9.30 A.M. We picked our way by lantern light for the first three miles along our recent trail,

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everything. In a few minutes our house would have been cut in two had not Thomsen and I donned our outer coats and long mittens and managed to plug up these holes from the outside with snow-blocks. Then we loosened the sledge cover and let it blow round the house. We really didn't 'let' it blow round the house; it simply did, and fortunately lodged in such a position that it kept the wind from cutting any other holes.

We were stormbound in this house for two days. Knight's heel did not pain him much when he sat still, but a large blister formed, making it very painful when he walked. The wind quieted down on the third day, and although Ramsay Island was still hidden by drifting snow, the sky overhead was clear, and so we started out to search for it, taking our direction by compass. After we had travelled about three miles the island suddenly loomed up dead ahead. Half an hour later we were all sitting in Illun's warm little camp feasting on seal-flippers. Illun's wife cooked them without removing the hair, but a little thing like that didn't bother us.

The Commander had given us orders to pick up Illun's party and take them with us to the *Polar Bear* camp; so, after a day of feasting, we all hit the trail together. Three days later, when about thirty miles from the *Bear*, we fell in with Captain Gonzales and Jim Fiji, who, not knowing that we had orders to fetch Illun's party to the *Bear*, were then on their way to visit them. Gonzales told us that during our absence John Jones, who had joined the expedition at Baillie Islands, had died of heart failure. I had not known him intimately, but those who knew him spoke with regret of his loss. He was known to be a likeable chap, a skilful engineer, and an energetic worker. Further news was that Jack Hadley had got into a fight with a polar bear, which had bitten him in the arm.

When we arrived at the ship next day Storkie and Charlie came running out to greet us. Then came old Levi, the pirate, with his great shining butcher-knife in hand; and Bill Seymour was there with his hearty "Howdy, boys!"

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Bright-eyed little Mamayauk looked like a northern queen in her wedding-robcs of deep purple plush and flaming scarlet, for she was now the bride of Gonzales. The event had happened only a few days before. The captain of a ship being a combined *ex-officio* magistrate and clergyman, Gonzales had had little difficulty in the matter of procuring a marriage licence for himself and fair one.

CHAPTER X

IT was now the 1st of February. Storkerson and Charlie had returned the day before from Mercy Bay, where they had been to get the heavy ice-sledges cached there.

Charlie and I were soon busy in a corner swapping adventures. Not a little had happened to us both in the two and a half months. Charlie told me of two amusing experiences he had had with Gonzales—amusing, that is, in retrospect. It appeared that those ice-sledges which Storkie had just brought in had caused no small commotion. Gonzales—who was before all picturesque—had decided to do the thing with a dash. So he had taken twelve dogs and hitched them to the sledge in one long line. Most of the dogs were Eskimo dogs that had never been in that kind of harness; besides, more than six dogs cannot be used satisfactorily in tandem harness. The temptation for a splendid fight was too great. The six dogs ahead wheeled round on those behind them and fur flew in all directions. By the time the men got the harnesses untangled some of the dogs were so badly chewed up that they were useless. This was the darkest time of the year. Charlie said that they made good time between fights, but the fights were so long and the days were so short that they never left camp very far behind. Then they ran into a blizzard and the dogs lay down. When the blizzard had blown itself out the comedy came to an end. They found themselves out of food and had to turn back. A few weeks later a tattered and hungry crew, with frozen noses and frostbitten fingers, returned to the *Polar Bear*, the dogs (what were left of them) being reduced to a few pounds of spare ribs.

"Charlie," said I, "tell that story to the Commander when you see him. You know he likes adventure."

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"But that isn't all," said Charlie, grinning appreciatively. Gonzales, he said, had started out again; this time taking Storkerson also with him. Still retaining notions of the regal splendour with which a captain should travel, he insisted on loading the sledge with canned tomatoes and tinned meats. These were heavy enough to haul, but their food value was slight; result, more hunger. Then when they were half-way to Mercy Bay Gonzales, who scorned advice from Storkerson, froze his feet. And Storkerson had to put him to bed in a sleeping-bag and haul him home.

"Well," I said, "that makes a beautiful story of heroism and sacrifice—Storkie hauling home his wounded comrade. For ever after they will love each other more and more."

"That's just the way Storkie feels about it," Charlie laughed ironically. "Sore? Talk about a man being sore! You should have seen his face as he came along with that package on his sledge! He looked like a man who had had palmed off on him two hundred pounds' worth of poor ethnological specimens that he knew he could have bought in any village for a dollar. His disgust was funny enough to make you almost forget the pangs of touring the Arctic in mid-winter on tomato ketchup."

Storkie had got the equipment for the spring work well under way when I arrived with the Commander's orders. He had kept the women busy making seal-skin boots, deer-skin socks, mittens, arctics, sleeping-bags, drill snow-shirts, etc., and the men occupied in repairing dog-harness, making new dog-lines of wire cable covered with canvas, weighing out rations of dog- and man-food and sewing them up in canvas sacks of fifty pounds each, and tightening up the sledge-runners and replacing broken stanchions.

Jim Fiji, Palaiyak, Illun, and Pikalu, with two sledges and all the available dogs, were started out on February 4 to make a cache at Point Russell (north-east Banks Island), which was about sixty miles from the ship; Jim and Palaiyak were then to return to camp, leaving the other Eskimos to guard the cache.

We were short of dogs, because dog-sickness had carried

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off some of our best, and those which had been used by Gonzales and Storkerson on the three Mercy Bay trips had sore feet or were otherwise incapacitated. We put them in the large warm dog-barn and gave them all the food they could eat.

Jim Fiji and Palaiyak returned from Point Russell on February 14. By that date our dogs were in passable condition and we set out with four teams and seven men—Storkie, Charlie, Thomsen, Jim, Palaiyak, Herman Kilian, and myself. We started northward through Prince of Wales Strait, following Jim's fresh trail. On the northward trip Blutchter, one of our best dogs, was taken violently ill; we unharnessed him and let him follow pathetically behind the rear sledge, but when we got to Russell—five days out from the *Polar Bear*—he was so far gone that there was no chance of recovery; and, fearing that the other dogs would become infected, we had to shoot him.

The next day (February 20), while stormbound at Russell, Storkie decided that he would be unable to get to Cape Alfred in time to make the ice trip. He therefore determined to abandon the ice trip project and join forces with the Commander on the New Land survey instead. Storkie sent Herman Kilian and Palaiyak with a fast dog-team north-west to Mercy Bay, where the Commander was then supposed to be, with a letter informing him of the situation and of our intention to start immediately for Melville Island, where we would make a cache of supplies which could be used by the New Land survey party.

The same day (February 21) we started north for Melville Island. Our party consisted of Storkie, Thomsen, Charlie, Illun, Pikalu, and myself, with three sledges and twenty-nine dogs. Jim remained at Russell to guard the extra supplies which we were unable to haul in one load.

We first met bad going at McClure Strait, which was solid with heavy ice that had drifted in during the previous autumn. Here and there huge knobs or stark pinnacles formed by the collision of giant floes projected above the general level of the surrounding ice, in the lee of which

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trailed long corrugated drifts of snow, packed by the intense wind and cemented by the low temperature into masses almost as hard as the ice underneath. Our road lay over these drifts, or in long *détours* round those too steep to be scaled. Sometimes we got into a blind alley and had to climb out by cutting footholes for ourselves and dogs, the dogs working our sledges up foot by foot to the top. The other side of the drift was frequently so steep that we had to unharness the dogs to save them from being crushed by the precipitate descent of the loaded sledges. Luckily for us, this condition of the ice did not extend all the way across the strait, which is eighty miles wide, although we met it occasionally throughout the trip. Nine days later we landed on Melville Island.

Melville Island is a misshapen mass, about 240 miles long. It barely escapes being two islands, for Liddon Gulf on the south, and Hecla and Griper Bay on the north, are separated only by an isthmus twenty miles wide. The western part of the island is, in general, high and rocky, and its cliff-lined coast is indented by narrow, twisting fiords. To the east the land is not nearly so rugged, except in certain places. One of these is the promontory of Cape Ross, at the south-west corner. With 500-foot cliffs, visible for a long distance out at sea, it is an admirable landmark.

Upon arrival at Cape Ross, with our ice-picks we dug a hole about five feet deep and four feet square in a heavy ice-floe and cached our loads (1123 pounds of condensed food, 54 gallons of fuel-oil, and a large assortment of clothing). Bears have long noses, so the food that was in bags, and our skin-clothing, we placed in the bottom of the hole and covered it with a waterproof canvas; on the top we put our cases of kerosene and filled up the hole with broken ice. We argued that if a bear got a good whiff of kerosene he would not care to investigate further. We left our two Eskimos behind to hunt ovibos, and commenced the return journey of a hundred and forty miles to the *Polar Bear* for another load.

The trip was made without adventure—our sledges now

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being empty we no longer had to harness ourselves to them, but could ride whenever we desired. We travelled back over our old trail, camping in our old snow-houses. The weather was cold, but we had warm clothing, comfortable snow-houses, and the sun had now returned, giving us sufficient light.

We used to have great sport with our dogs, for it was not long before we became real pals with all of them. In the mornings when it came time to be 'on trail' and they saw us at the sledges, they would jump up beside their dog-lines and howl and tug on their chains, eager to be harnessed. At first I had to grab each one of my dogs in turn and lead him over to his harness, but after a time we became such friends that all I had to do was to unsnap their chains and my dogs would follow me, snuggle their heads into the harness collars and wag their tails while I snapped their belly-bands.

"Get in the harness there, Comic! All right, Four! Come now, Whisky! Gasoline! Tobacco Juice! Mush!" A shove at the handlebars would start the sledges, and away we would go across the ice—'on trail.' Tobacco Juice and Gasoline caused us more trouble than all the others put together. Both were shaggy, sharp-eared, sharp-eyed, and sharp-toothed little beggars, with a grudge against each other. They had been bought from the 'Blond' Eskimos and renamed, partly because their Eskimo names were difficult for us to pronounce, and partly because they were not descriptive of the dogs' characters. Gasoline was very explosive—a born troublemaker. Tobacco Juice had a special abhorrence for anything that looked like tobacco juice, and whenever he came to any tobacco stains on the snow he would jump about four feet in the air and land on the opposite side of his trail partner, with whom he would immediately commence to fight.¹

Hans was a fat beggar, and crafty. He was a veteran of the last two ice trips with a great reputation. Did we come

¹ Storkie, Charlie, Thomsen, and some of the Eskimos used to chew tobacco, and our trail would be a continuous line of tobacco stains.

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to a stretch of specially hard pulling, we would see Hans, belly to the ground, with his feet spread out, apparently pulling with every ounce of his strength; and whenever the sledge got stuck he would jump up barking, impatient and indignant that, in spite of all his efforts, the sledge had stopped. Then at the word "Mush" he would dig in again, belly to the ground as before. But I noticed one day while we were topping a drift, and good old Hans was spread out nearly flat, seemingly doing more than his share to keep the sledge moving, that his trace was slack. And I found out with a shock that Hans was a colossal bluff. The old wise-acre wasn't pulling a pound. A sharp touch of the whip showed a much-surprised dog that the best trick he knew was no longer any good.

On March 6 we reached John Russell, where we had left Jim Fiji in a new snow-house. Jim did not notice our arrival. I crawled into the long passageway of his house and poked my head through the low doorway—to see the drollest sight I had ever looked upon. Poor Jim was sitting hunched up in front of a smoking black lantern without a chimney, looking anxiously into a little black pot swung over the flame. The walls and roof of the house had been spotlessly white when we last saw them. Now they were as black as Jim, who in turn was as black as coal.

"Hello, Jim! Having a good time?"

"Dis damn Primus he go out! I usa da lantern for to make a cup of tea dis las' six day now."

Poor old Jim had had hard luck. He was a mighty faithful old soul, but he didn't know much about Primus stoves; the valve had started to leak air and he didn't know what to do with it. His clothes were a sight—soot from head to foot! And the temperature inside his house was about zero. But there he had stayed, garbed in his artegis and mittens, patient as ever. We built a clean, new house, and Jim came to stay with us. He had not had a hot meal for a long time.

We went on, and Jim stayed behind again to look after four of our dogs that had developed the terrible dog disease.

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Commander should certainly have overtaken us if he were going to make the survey trip. However, now that we felt fairly certain that he was not coming, Storkie said that it was up to us to make a success of the New Land survey. We would, of course, leave caches and letters along our northward trail for the Commander, in case he should be following us.

CHAPTER XI

APRIL the 4th. Northward! Forward march! Our dogs were in good trim, and when we started off the teams galloped along with their 1200-pound sledge-loads. But the novelty of pulling such loads soon wears off, and it was not long before we had harnessed ourselves to the sledges and were helping.

In the six months since our ship had been frozen in at Armstrong Point we had travelled by sledge and dog-team 1050 miles—a mere preliminary to our main trip, which was just beginning. Our route lay northward, along the low grass-covered east coast of Liddon Gulf.

Just as we were leaving Cape Ross a band of five ovibos that had been concealed in a creek-bed came out on top of the cut bank. They saw us, and after hesitating a moment as if in doubt, commenced to run, heading for the cliffs at the cape. It seemed impossible for those cliffs to be scaled, but the five animals climbed right up the nearly vertical bank, five hundred feet in height, and paused on top for a minute—five great, black, shaggy bags of wool, silhouetted against a crystal sky.

About nine miles farther on we came to a huge block of ice, which looked like a giant die the ice-gods had been gambling with. It was fifteen feet high, with perpendicular sides, and we had to cut steps into it with axes in order to get to the top. As our sledges were overloaded we cached about three hundred pounds of meat on top of this 'ice-box,' using ropes to haul it up. No animal, except man, could ever climb up to get at this cache, which would be used by our returning support parties.

We now had three dog-teams. Herman Kilian and Pikalu, the first support party, would turn back from the

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bottom of the gulf ; Thomsen and Illun, the second support party, with the second team, were to accompany us as far as the New Land, where they would turn back ; Storkerson, Charlie, and I would be the advance party. We intended, after the others had left us, to proceed until our sledge provisions were used up ; then we would go on, living off the country, as the Commander and Storkerson had done on their previous trips.

Three days later (April 7) we arrived at Hooper Island, near the bottom of Liddon Gulf. As we proceeded northward our loads did not become lighter, because we kept feeding the dogs with the game we killed *en route*, thus saving our condensed rations for use when we had passed out of the good game country. Melville Island is the best game country I have ever seen. We counted over a hundred ovibos on our way north through the gulf. Their long wool and hair conceals their legs as their feet sink into patches of soft snow, making them look like huge blankets as they move along.

Nearly always they would let us come right up to them before running, and even then they would stop a few hundred feet away and bunch up, the venerable-looking, heavy-horned bulls in front, facing the enemy, and the cows and calves in the rear. They would stand and glare at us, snorting their dissatisfaction and rubbing their horns in the ground and against their legs. After one of the old bulls had made up his mind to go, he would shake his head, wheel round and clatter off, followed by the whole herd.

We found the yearlings to be the best eating. They were juicy and tender, and resembled beef very closely. The old bulls were like sole leather. Once when we tried to cook some of the meat we had to cut it up into little cubes three-quarters of an inch square, and even then it would not cook tender, and we finally had to swallow the cubes whole, for they were too much for our teeth.

On April 14 we said farewell to Herman and Pikalu. We now had two sledges and nineteen dogs, with which we headed north across the narrow isthmus leading to the sea-ice of Hecla and Griper Bay. Arriving at the bay, we made

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cache of supplies at Point Nias for the use of Thomsen and Ilun when they in turn should leave us to return to the *Polar Bear*.

Hecla and Griper Bay is horseshoe-shaped and about a hundred miles wide. We followed the west coast north. The ice offshore was all very old and hummocky, and apparently had not moved during the preceding summer. We travelled along what had been a narrow lead of open water between the shore and the ice ; it was now, of course, frozen to a depth of about nine feet. As the surface of this ice was very glossy and slippery and resembled fresh-water ice, we tasted it, and found that there was not the faintest trace of salt. Part of the water of which this ice was formed came from the land and part of it came from the sea-ice. Paradoxical as it may seem, sea-ice becomes fresh after about one year, the salt or brine being frozen out, or rather being squeezed out, by the process of contraction and expansion. This layer of fresh water froze in the fall of the year when the lead was too narrow for waves to form, and thus the fresh water on top was not mixed with the salt water farther down. It now resembled ordinary lake-ice.

In the places that had been blown free from snow we made good speed, although the dogs found it difficult to keep their footing on the glare ice. Sometimes, if the wind was strong, the sledges would be blown sidewise until they landed up against a snowdrift, or the edge of the rough ice ; but when we had a fair wind the sledges would glide along, sometimes running on top of the dogs.

But our good going came to an end some forty miles farther on when we arrived at Cape Fisher. We had great difficulty in building our house that night. The snow was of the same cement-like formation that we had had so much trouble with on the Banks Island trip. Cape Fisher is apparently a blow-hole. Everywhere the snow was packed so hard that we had to use axes to break open places from which to cut blocks. The land a short distance inland is rough and rugged, reaching a height of eight hundred feet. This, perhaps, accounts for the hard snow, for we have noted

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that wherever the land is high that vicinity seems to be a focusing-point for winds.

The next day we started across Macormick Inlet, where the going was rather difficult because high snowdrifts had formed in the lee of the rough rubble-ice with which the inlet was littered. Our heavy sledges often got stuck in these drifts, and it was only by shouting at the dogs and pulling and tugging at the sledges ourselves that we could budge them.

On April 20 we reached Cape Grassy, which as its name implies is covered with rich, deep grass that even the winter snows had failed to hide entirely.

Our route from Grassy led north over the sea-ice. Ahead no land was visible—only the white, shadowy forms of the ice-cakes. The sky was overcast and the light which found its way through the clouds was soft, mellow, and diffused, making everything seem even and smooth. Below the horizon, we knew, lay the New Land, mysterious, unexplored.

A little snow-bunting fluttered by and disappeared in the northern sky. Spring, and New Land. The snow-bunting also was going to the New Land.

Storkie led off across the ice. "All right, boys, mush!" was his command to the dogs as we shook the sledges loose and manned our hauling-straps. With light hearts we followed our leader. We had travelled about four miles when suddenly the weather cleared. To the north-east was land—big, columnar cliffs, which Storkie had not seen when he and the Commander had returned by this route. We changed our course, which had been north by west for Cape Murray, the west tip of the New Land (that is, the westernmost point reached the previous year), and headed directly for these cliffs, which we thought must be the south-eastern extremity of the New Land. It did not appear to be more than twenty-five or thirty miles away, but as we travelled on the land did not seem to grow any clearer. Not only that, but it actually changed its appearance as we watched it. The cliffs no longer had a columnar formation; they

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floated upside down in the sky in a zigzag, crazy fashion. We had been deceived by a mirage.

We resumed our original course. The ice here, like that to the south of us, was old and hummocky, and did not appear to have moved much during the preceding summer. As the hollows between hummocks had been drifted full of snow, now packed hard, we found the going easy, and were able to get along at the rate of fifteen miles per day, which, considering our heavy loads, was a pretty good mileage.

Land! We reached land on April 28, and almost immediately saw tracks of numerous caribou and wolves, whereupon Storkie and Illun went inland to hunt while we built the snow-house. Soon we heard a lot of bombarding, and then Illun came running back for a sledge and dogs to haul home the meat. They had killed five caribou over a little ridge, not five hundred yards away. Not so bad for our first day on the New Land!

During the four months since we had separated from our Commander at Cape Kellett we had had no word from him. I wondered what he was doing, whether or not he was out on the ice of the Beaufort Sea in search of new lands, or if by any chance he was on our trail. This last seemed unlikely, or surely he would have joined us long ago. But there was no time for idle speculation. Thomsen and Illun unloaded their sledge and, taking with them just enough provisions to last until they should reach Melville Island, they bade us good-bye and good luck and started south.

We three were left alone, Storkie, Charlie, and I. We had one sledge, nine dogs, and provisions for fifty days for men and dogs. We knew that by the time these provisions were gone the seals would be out on top of the ice. We could also kill caribou on the land, and thereby prolong our trip as long as we desired. Storkerson at once commenced taking observations of the sun in order to ascertain our position.

We now had before us the charting of a great new land. Our intentions were to follow the west coast north as far as it would take us, then east along its north coast, and then round to the south, completing the circuit. The

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weather had turned quite warm, and for the first time our snow-house proved unsatisfactory, its roof melting completely. So we put up our little five-sided Burberry tent, which, being dark, also had the advantage of protecting our eyes from snow-blindness.

The third night at Cape Murray we were awakened by a racket outside the tent. The dogs were barking furiously, something struck against the canvas, the door-flap parted, and a face peered in at us. In the darkness we could barely distinguish the whites of its eyes and the gleam of white teeth. The thing shook its head—it spoke—it was a man!

“Hello, boys! The boss sez for you fellows to slow up a bit!” It was little Split-the-Wind.

“Come on in, Split, old scout!” We lighted the Primus and cooked him a big feed. The little fellow had made forty miles without stopping. We plied him with question after question. Why hadn’t they connected with our party sooner? Did they find Storkerson’s letter at Mercy Bay? Split astonished us all by saying that the Commander, with a broken leg, was only two days’ journey behind us.

CHAPTER XII

SPLIT said that the Commander, with Castel, Martin Kilian, Natkusiak of the *North Star* camp, and himself had been following our trail for the last two hundred and fifty miles, and that the Commander had sent him on ahead with the racing team to overtake us. He brought a letter from Stefansson instructing us to wait for him. Storkerson wrote out a brief report of our work up to date and sent it back by Split.

Two days later the Commander arrived. He limped from the sledge, leaning on the shoulder of Natkusiak. He answered our anxious inquiries by saying that his leg was not fractured, but that his ankle was very badly sprained. He had broken through a drift of crusted snow about a week before and had been compelled to ride ever since. Thomsen and Illun, who had met him on their return journey, accompanied him back to our camp.

Natkusiak was the new member of the party. I had never seen him, but Stefansson had told me a good deal about him. They had met on one of Stefansson's earlier expeditions, and Natkusiak had accompanied him on his visit to the 'Copper' Eskimos of Coronation Gulf. He had joined Stefansson on the present expedition in 1914, and had since been one of the crew of the *North Star*. Therefore, he and the Commander were old friends. Natkusiak was a little man, about forty, a typical Eskimo, but with a fair command of English, for he had worked on ships; he was jolly, fond of telling funny stories, and a bundle of energy.

Having abandoned hope that the Commander would join us, we were naturally excited by his arrival and eager to know all about it. The explanation was simple enough. He had waited at the *North Star* for Storkerson, who failed to appear.

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Stefansson had sent Castel east to Mercy Bay to look for him. Castel had returned without news. Not knowing what had happened to delay Storkerson, the Commander himself had started out to meet him and had found Storkerson's letter at Mercy Bay. It seemed that Castel had found a large bay immediately west of Mercy, which was not shown on the chart, and which he had naturally mistaken for Mercy Bay. Not finding any indications that anyone had been there before him, he had returned to the *North Star* without news.

The Commander gathered from Storkerson's letter that if he pushed on north he would catch us at Melville Island. But he was too late. At Cape Ross, Melville Island, he found our cache and the letter telling of our intention to go north to Borden Island, as the New Land is now called on the maps. He then decided to return to the *Polar Bear* and give Captain Gonzales orders to bring the ship to Melville Island the following summer. For he had resolved to make another ice trip into the polar ocean the next spring, and for this trip he needed the men, provisions, and equipment on the *Bear*. After one day's journey toward the *Polar Bear* he was overtaken by our first support party, Herman and Pikalu, who told him of our progress, and who were able to give him information as to the situation at the *Polar Bear*. Stefansson now decided to forgo the trip to the *Bear*, wrote out orders for Herman to deliver to Captain Gonzales, and once more turned toward Melville Island, picking up our trail, which he had followed for the last two hundred and fifty miles, oftentimes travelling in one day a distance that it had taken us two days to cover. But now that he had caught up with us, there was plenty of time to rest his worn-out dogs.

The Commander took advantage of this respite to complete his plans for the coming year. Storkerson was to be in charge of operations at Melville Island, the main base-camp for the next year. He would first proceed to the *Bear* to carry fuller instructions to Gonzales and to bring his wife and family and seamstress Pannigabluk north. Peter Lopez and Alingnak with their families had been at the *North Star* with

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Wilkins during the winter, and were now probably on Melville Island, for the Commander, upon leaving the *Star*, had instructed them to follow soon afterward; they would assist Storkie. Thomsen was to return to Kellett and bring his family to Melville, where they also would join forces with Storkie.

The men at Melville were to construct a camp, to explore the island for coal, and to hunt.¹ The women were to help them cut the meat into long, thin strips for drying on rocks or poles. This dry meat was to be saved for our next year's ice trip. The hides of caribou and seal were to be dried so that they could be used for clothing. Storkerson with Thomsen, Illun, and Martin left on May 7.

There now remained for the advance work the Commander (who thought, as we, he would soon have the use of his ankle), Castel, Charlie, Natkusiak, Split, and me. Castel, Charlie, and I had started northward to relay some provisions before Storkerson's party was ready to leave. A few days later the Commander, Natkusiak, and Split overtook us.

The weather had become slightly colder, making it possible for us to use houses again. I mention this because it gave me an opportunity to test my snow-house building ability. One afternoon, after travelling about fifteen miles, we saw three caribou grazing on a plain not more than a mile away. Castel went after them, leaving Charlie and me to build the snow-house. We cut the blocks and then Charlie passed them to me while I made my first attempt at building a real house (I had built several small porches or alleyways, but no large houses). The first three tiers went up all right, but when I tried to put on the roof I found it was more difficult than I had imagined. Block after block came tumbling down on me before I finally succeeded. Stefansson and his party came along just as I was finishing. He thought it was a pretty good house, but I don't believe he would have had the patience to stand and watch me build it.

Castel came back without having killed any caribou,

¹ From the records of earlier expeditions we knew that coal had been found on Melville Island.

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although we could still see them feeding on the plain. The Commander sent Natkusiak and Split after them; they returned in an hour, having killed two.

Stefansson was the only white man of our party who could go out and kill caribou whenever he saw them, but now that his ankle incapacitated him for hunting, most of this work fell on Natkusiak, who was one of the best Eskimo hunters I have ever known; he was a tireless walker, and when he found caribou he had the patience to wait interminably for a chance to approach them from behind cover. Most inexperienced men are too impatient, and when the caribou happen to be in a place which affords no cover are unable to wait for the quarry to move to a more advantageous position.

Warm weather! Fog! Snow! Our bright, sunshiny days were now over. Accurate mapping was out of the question. The Commander said that at this time of the year if we were to wait for good weather we might have to wait a month, and as we could not afford to waste time by remaining in camp we continued our trip, following along the ice at the edge of the land, taking bearings of every little mud-hummock on the beach as we worked our way along, and doing the best we could under the circumstances.

In about a week we reached the north-west corner of Borden Island. North-east of us lay Isachsen Land (discovered in 1902 by Sverdrup). The ice between us and Isachsen was apparently landfast, as we were able to judge by the direction of the floe. The 'floe' is the line of demarcation between landfast and moving sea-ice. At all times the sea-ice works vertically up and down along the solid front of this landfast ice. This motion is caused by the ebb and flow of the tides. Whenever a wind is blowing from the land the crack between movable and immovable ice widens out into a lead which may be anything from six inches to twenty miles in width, according to the strength of the wind, and according to whether or not there are currents sufficient to counterbalance its force.

The Commander said that whenever this lead of open water

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was less than two hundred yards in width seals could always be secured in it. The greater portion of a seal's food comes from the small animal life of the ocean, such as shrimps, etc. The work of eminent marine biologists has shown that this plankton is found in undiminished quantities throughout the entire polar basin, irrespective of latitude or of ice conditions. Stefansson on his last two ice trips into this polar ocean had proved that seals were to be found wherever there were large fields of last year's ice (ice not over seven feet in thickness).

The reason for this is that the water is the natural habitat of seals, and therefore they stay wherever open water is to be found. With the coming of cold weather the surface of the sea freezes over, first with a scum of slush-ice. Seals are mammals and therefore need air; they break their way upward through the slush-ice to breathe. In this way a seal opens a number of breathing-holes, and as the weather becomes colder the ice freezes thicker and the seals find it difficult to smash their way upward. They therefore visit the holes they have already made, keeping them open by gnawing. A seal will have probably twenty of these holes, which as winter comes on are covered with a layer of snow.

In winter the Eskimos of Minto Inlet and Coronation Gulf hunt these seals by watching at the breathing-holes, but as each seal has so many holes a hunter may often wait for two weeks at a time before he is able to spear one. For this reason those Eskimos (in winter) live in snow-house villages and hunt in large numbers, so that each day one or more of the hunters is able to spear a seal. The villagers then divide the meat equally so that no one goes hungry. This method of hunting, while successful in a large community, cannot be used advantageously in a small one; furthermore, its use involves a considerable delay. We therefore never attempted to kill seals by this method. However, there was no occasion for us to do so, for in travelling over moving ice in winter the seals desert their holes whenever a lead opens and travel up and down it, appearing at the surface periodically for air.¹

¹ The seals in all Arctic waters are hair seals, not to be confused with the fur seals of Bering Sea.

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The hunters can then station themselves at intervals along the lead and shoot them at will. A seal shot in the water in winter-time is fat and always floats, and can easily be secured either by a long hook and line, or, if the distance is too great, by launching a sledge-raft or boat.

In summer the seals are so thin that they sink if shot when in the water, so during that time this method cannot be used with much success. But in spring the days are warm, and the seals like to lie beside their winter breathing-holes, or beside the leads, and bask in the sunshine. They can then be stalked and killed while on top of the ice.

The floe running north-easterly in the direction of Isachsen Land, the Commander told us, was apparently composed of young ice on its western side and therefore would contain seals. If the wind or current were in a particular direction the floe would widen out into a lead, permitting the seals to leave their rather cramped breathing-holes and revel in the open water.

Stefansson regarded this information about the life in the polar ocean as one of the most important results of his work in the North. It was only one fact among many which we learned from him without the need of experimenting for ourselves. Ignorance of this natural food-supply at hand, ignorance of how to keep dry and warm, and of the other comparatively simple bits of native wisdom which Stefansson had learned during his life among the Eskimos and reduced to a science, had caused the death, or the defeat, of many earlier explorers. As he often said, there was nothing remarkable about it, any other man might have made the same observations and formulated the same rules of travel which made our trips safe and fairly comfortable. But the answer to that, of course, is that no other man did.

We had now reached the north-west corner of Borden Island. To complete our work of determining the northern limits of the island we must now travel east along the north coast. We could see that the ice along our prospective route was landfast and old, and therefore contained few,

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if any, seals. Furthermore, judging by the number of caribou we had seen so far—nine—we could not expect to kill enough for sustenance, especially as Natkusiak was now our only able hunter. The party consisted of six men with three dog-teams. We had enough condensed food for men and dogs for about twelve days. The Commander's ankle still incapacitated him for hunting, and it was not improving. He felt obliged, therefore, once more to change his plans.

He outlined the situation to us, and then asked Castel and me if we wanted a chance to distinguish ourselves. Of course we did! He said: "We can't go on together if we are to accomplish the work we came up here to do. If you are willing to take an opportunity and a responsibility, I will give you most of the provisions and one good team of dogs and let you go on and finish the survey."

He said that he, with the other two teams, would go out to the floe where Natkusiak could hunt seals. Seeing how elated we were, he said that the survey was not all he had in mind for us.

"I was planning to explore the sea-ice to the north of Isachsen Land to ascertain whether Crocker Land exists. But I can't trust my ankle. Do you object to making that trip when your survey work is done?"

Castel and I looked at each other. Plainly he was as thrilled as I was. No, we told the Commander, we did not object! I quote our instructions from my diary:

May 20, 1916.—We are to follow the land (Borden Island), surveying it as we go until it turns at least two points south of east; where we shall then leave it, heading for Cape Isachsen. From here (Isachsen) we shall then proceed to the supposed location of Crocker Land, lat. 83° N., long. 105° W. If we find land we are to explore that side which faces the open water (the west shore). We are to return to Melville Island by the 10th of July—if circumstances permit. If possible we are also to determine whether the New Land (Borden) is connected with Findlay Island; and also to ascertain if Findlay Island, Paterson Island, and King

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Christian Land are in reality one island. We are taking with us nine dogs and provisions for dogs for thirty days and for men for forty days.

Castel, of course, was in command; I only went with him. Nevertheless, I felt proud to have been selected; I thought it was quite an honour for a boy not yet twenty-one.

CHAPTER XIII

THE next morning Castel and I loaded our sledge with the provisions, our spare clothing, dog-boots, rifles and ammunition, and, most important of all, the scientific instruments—the sextant and artificial horizon, prismatic compass, aneroid barometer, thermometers, binoculars, charting instruments, and spare leads for taking soundings. The Commander and his party made ready for their start at the same time. We broke camp together on May 21, the Commander heading out along the floe and we east. Castel and I were in high spirits. It was an inspiring thing to realize that so great a trust had been reposed in us.

Castel led the way while I hauled on a strap fastened to one of the sledge stanchions. The going was bad, and we frequently got stuck in the deep, soft snowdrifts, which we had to shovel away before we could proceed. After I had had an hour at the hauling-strap Castel would take my place and I would look back over my shoulder to see the little fellow digging in. In this manner, taking turns, we proceeded along the coast, stopping at each point of land to take bearings of the next ahead and of the one behind, and sketching in the topography. We worked eight or nine hours a day at this and then pitched our tent. I usually cooked supper, while Castel plotted our position on the map and made a sketch of the day's survey.

Although we had taken the fattest dogs from both teams, they were all native dogs, short-legged and much smaller than the white men's dogs which the Commander had kept for his team. We found that they could only with the greatest difficulty haul our load through the deep, soft snow; and because of their strenuous exertions they lost

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weight rapidly. To make matters worse, the pemmican was so salty that our dogs were continually eating snow, and so lean that we had to feed blubber with it, or they would have been unable to keep on travelling. Dogs when on the trail need a ration consisting of at least half a pound of fat and three-quarters of a pound of lean, dry meat or saltless pemmican. When feeding fresh meat they require about five pounds each per day, unless the meat is exceptionally fat.

At the end of thirty miles we found that the coast began to trend in a southerly direction. There we pitched the tent, and staked out our dogs, and built a cairn to mark the end of our survey. That night Castel and I held a little celebration, because we had finished the first part of our work. We gloated over our sketches of Borden. In imagination we charted marvellous isles lying along the route of the trip we were soon to make north of Isachsen. And Castel sang sailor chanteys to an audience of one man and nine howling dogs.

Castel was always an admirable companion. He was eager to teach me anything he knew. We had two books on astronomy which I was studying, and with Castel to help me I soon learned to take observations. He showed me how to use the sextant, and in a few days I was able to determine our position by its readings. In the morning before we started out we used to take a 'time sight' for longitude if the sun were visible. Then after travelling until about fifteen minutes before noon we would stop for the latitude sight, continuing our journey after a short rest until camping-time.

The next day we struck north heading for Cape Isachsen, some fifty miles distant. Overcast weather and fog and blizzards made it difficult for us to keep a true course. In the spring of the year in these latitudes it is so light the twenty-four hours through, and the rays of the sun filtering through the clouds are so diffused, that it is impossible (without looking at the watch and compass) to tell where the sun is, or whether it is night or day. Overcast days are the bane of an explorer's existence. Cakes or ridges of

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sledges for some five hundred miles since leaving the *Polar Bear* we were quite used to that.

The Commander, however, had had one which had nearly cost him his life. His ankle had improved so much that he had gone out seal-hunting. Seeing a seal from the top of a very old pressure-ridge whose surface was all fused by many summer thaws, he started to make his way down the gently sloping side of the ridge, intending to stalk the seal. Having given Castel and me one of the glass snow-goggles and Split (whose job it was to run ahead of the dogs) the other, he was using the Eskimo type of goggle himself. The Eskimo goggles are made of a thin piece of wood or bone, with narrow slits to look through. Though they afford excellent protection from snow-blindness, they limit the range of vision so much that the wearer cannot see where he is stepping unless he bends his head and looks down directly at his feet.

While he was making his way down this old pressure-ridge Stefansson suddenly found himself falling. He picked himself up at the bottom of a fourteen-feet deep crevasse. Fortunately he had escaped with nothing more serious than a bruised hip and a pair of broken snowshoes. The ice under his feet was only eight inches thick, with an open crack in its centre; perpendicular walls towered above. A day sooner and he would have fallen into open water (the eight-inch ice had formed during the previous night). After crawling along for some distance in the bottom of the crevasse he found a place where the sides were only about nine feet high, and by cutting steps in the ice with his knife he managed to get out.

His fall had not injured him seriously and he resumed his seal-hunt. But on the way home he slipped and sprained his ankle again. However, the ankle was again recovering, and he would—as Split had told us—hobble about a bit.

Although the Commander was one of the most patient men I have ever known, there was one topic of conversation which irritated him exceedingly—the subject of food tastes. He believed that no one on an exploring expedition should

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ever express a longing for any food which he was accustomed to eat when in civilization and which he was then without ; furthermore, he thought that every one should agree with him that a diet of meat alone was as agreeable as any other. But most men on the expedition preferred a mixed diet, and oftentimes they would discuss what particular foods they would order first when they returned to civilization. Some said they would order peas, others beefsteak. Castel's favourite dish was baked potatoes ; Split's was peas. They used to talk to one another about the big feeds they would have. But this talk was purely academic, for I never knew either of them to complain about any particular food we happened to be eating at the time. However, now that the end of our condensed food was in sight (for we had but three weeks' food left on the sledges), Stefansson said that when we came to live on meat alone Split and Castel would object, and that therefore he had decided to send them south. Castel was offended ; because, while he had upheld his belief in a mixed diet as against one of meat alone, yet he had never expressed a desire to return to the base-camp because of unwillingness to live on meat. As this was the only time on the expedition that I knew Stefansson to do a thing to another man that seemed to me unkind or unjust, I have cast about in my mind for the reason for it. I am convinced that the enforced inactivity and delays due to his bad ankle, which probably was paining him much more than he let anyone know, had strained his nerves to the snapping-point. He was the best walker in the party, and he had chafed at being dragged on a sledge. It was ' nerves ' that made him tell Castel that his poetic rhapsodies about potatoes were the cause of his disgrace. In reality he did not send Castel and Split back for any such trivial reason. Now that he had taken command again and was himself to make the trip over the ice, he did not need so many men and dogs ; in fact, he could not take so many. One of the first rules to be observed in living off the country, especially if one is entering unknown territory, is to take the fewest possible number of men and dogs. Furthermore,

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the eastern limit of Borden Island was as yet unknown; it might extend to Findlay Island on the charts—in fact, be only the west half of Findlay. Castel was the only man in the party who was competent to make that survey. Castel was therefore sent back because he was a good surveyor; and Split and Natkusiak because they were needed elsewhere and we could not take them. Potatoes and peas had nothing to do with it. The pity was that Stefansson had ever thought they had.

Castel was instructed to head due south from Isachsen, and map the east coast of Borden Island, and thence proceed to Melville Island. Natkusiak, when he should get down to Melville Island, was instructed to bring Alingnak and his family north to the south-west corner of Brock Island (near Borden Island), where they were to hunt seals and caribou, and establish a winter base that we could use for our next year's ice trip. Castel and Split were to place themselves under Storkie's command as soon as they should reach Melville.

CHAPTER XIV

THE three of us that now remained—Stefansson, Charlie, and I—intended to strike northward over the ice, to see what we should find. We intended to travel on until there was just time enough for us to return to the camp which Natkusiak would build on Brock Island before the break-up of the ice.

When Castel's party started south on June 4 they took with them all but about seven days' rations of food. As our plan was to live off the country we might just as well begin with seven days' rations as with a month's, for the trip would probably last several months.

The real test was to commence. Could we feed ourselves and dogs on what the country provided? We were some five hundred miles away from our ship, and were now headed northward over unexplored ice in search of more undiscovered land. Neither Charlie nor I had ever killed a seal, and our Commander's ankle was still weak.

I must admit that our first day's travel offshore was an anxious one. The Commander limped away on his snowshoes, telling us to wait an hour or so before following his trail. Charlie and I waited until the hour was up and then started out. Every so often we saw by the snowshoe trail we were following that Stefansson had stopped to rest. When about four miles out from camp we saw a black speck ahead. It was motionless. We approached it and soon made it out to be a seal, and as it was directly in our path and did not move we knew that the Commander had killed it.

Sure enough, when we pulled up beside it, a blotch of red on the ice told the story. We tied a rope round its head, lashed it to the stern of our sledge, and travelled on dragging it behind. It is remarkable how easily a seal

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(which may weigh from forty to two hundred pounds) can be dragged along in this manner. All that is necessary is to lay the seal on its back (so that the front flippers do not act as a drag) and tie the head up high so that it will not get snagged on ice-cakes. A mile and a half farther on we found our Commander sitting on top of a gigantic pressure ridge. We wondered how he could possibly have climbed up to the top of that miniature mountain-chain. Huge blocks of bluish-tinted glare ice were piled together, blocks ranging in size from that of a man's head to that of his house—all jumbled together like half a dozen Woolworth Buildings that had been smashed to pieces and thrown in a heap, bare and shiny and splintered. But as we circled to the other side of it we saw that there was a huge snow-drift in its lee, by which Stefansson had climbed up.

We pitched tent at the base of the great, towering ridge, and after having fed the dogs and eaten supper we climbed to the summit, where we could see for miles and miles in every direction. The ice to seaward was rough—long, jagged, crooked barriers, formed by the pressure of the shifting pack. We watched huge floes being jostled against each other, grinding, crunching; and the weaker floes crumpling, buckling, bending, snapping. So intense was the pressure that even the massive ridge we were on quivered like a leaf. We had difficulty in securing a good observation that night, because the ice agitation seldom ceased long enough to allow the sensitive quicksilver of the artificial horizon to regain a placid surface.

From the top of this ridge we saw a seal lying on a patch of level ice beside a crack about five hundred yards distant. Stefansson had already killed a seal during the day, and we were in no need of dog-food, but Charlie and I wanted to learn how to hunt, and Stefansson was eager to teach us; all the more so because if anything should happen to his weak ankle we should find ourselves in a mighty dangerous position.

So the Commander described to us just how to approach a seal. The chief point in the technique of seal-hunting



BEARDED SEAL AFTER SKIN HAS BEEN REMOVED

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; to make the seal think that his hunter is another seal. Seals have poor eyesight, and the hunter can walk to within three hundred yards of his prey. Then he must crawl; and when the seal first sees him he must be stretched out roadside, so that he looks like a basking seal.

Charlie and I drew straws—or rather matches—to see which of us should try his luck. Charlie won. He scrambled down the ridge. When he got to within four hundred yards he began to watch his quarry very intently, according to directions. Whenever the seal raised its head Charlie stopped and waited until it went to sleep again before moving forward.¹ At three hundred yards Charlie began to crawl on his hands and knees, crouching down whenever the seal lifted its head. At two hundred and fifty yards Charlie lay down flat on the ice, broadside to the seal, and edged his way carefully forward. Then the seal caught sight of him and made a little nervous flop toward the crack and, head up, neck craned, looked anxiously at Charlie, who was lying there in plain sight and really looked like another seal.

Then Charlie lifted his head and looked all round, just as the seal had done, and after an interval of about twenty-five seconds laid his head down on the ice. The seal in the meantime remained very alert—head up, watching this new black thing. Thirty seconds slipped by, when Charlie raised his head and again looked round as before, this time wriggling his feet just as the seal had wriggled its flippers. The seal evidently made up its mind that it had nothing to fear, and probably felt rather ashamed of itself for having suspected Charlie of being anything other than a brother seal. At any rate, it paid no further attention to Charlie and went to sleep.

I was using the Commander's powerful binoculars, for it was part of my education to watch the stalk.

"What are you laughing at, Noice?"

It had suddenly struck me that Charlie was wearing an

¹ Seals seldom sleep more than two minutes at a time, and average about fifty seconds.

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utterly disreputable pair of seal-skin trousers that he had made himself. They were so old and worn that they looked mangy, but still Charlie clung to them. Somehow as I saw him wriggling toward the material for a new pair, the whole thing struck me as so ridiculous that I burst out laughing. I felt sure that he would never give up the new pair, made from the first seal he had shot, not even to a museum.

Charlie continued to imitate the seal's movements whenever the animal raised its head, and when it was asleep he would squirm forward a little closer. Finally he got to within fifty yards, and then, when the creature raised its head, Charlie fired. The coveted trousers were almost his. There was but one chance of a slip now. Seals nearly always lie on the very edge of their holes or cracks, and the impact of the bullet often starts the body sliding into the water—but Charlie got there in time.

Charlie tied a line round the seal's head and proudly dragged it to camp.

The next day we continued our journey out over the ice. The sky was overcast, making it difficult for us to keep a straight course. Toward camp-time we suddenly saw land dead ahead. Hurrah! Land discovered! The dogs seemed to scent it, for they commenced to run pell-mell toward it. In a very few minutes we found ourselves right on top of our new 'island.' What we had taken for new land was land, but it was land on top of the ice—a ridge of gravel, boulders, clay, and mud. There were even some lichens adhering to the soil, and some of the boulders must have weighed at least a hundred pounds. This ridge, which in the deceptive light peculiar to the Arctic had loomed so large, was fifty-four feet long, five feet deep, and fifteen feet wide. What had happened apparently was this: heavy ice had drifted in close under precipitous cliffs and there had been a landslide down upon the ice. Then during the next summer the floe had broken away from the beach and had drifted out to sea, carrying all these rocks and dirt as passengers.

We now had a succession of overcast and foggy days, but

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So we tramped across to the island in single file. I went first, Charlie second, the Commander last.

Of course, Stefansson was as cool as the proverbial cucumber, but I think he was just as elated as we, only he wouldn't show it. Charlie and I danced and shouted; and then we all celebrated by cooking the last remnants of our provisions (our last chocolate stew).

We stopped for observations, and while I built a beacon on top of a hill about a mile from camp, Charlie set to work making a cross out of boxwood. He carved the following legend upon it: "Canadian Arctic Expedition, June 15, 1916." The Commander wrote out a record which we all signed, and then sealed it up in some empty tin cans we had carried for that purpose. This record was left in the beacon and Charlie's cross was propped up on top. The record read:

Meridian Distance, about $4^{\circ} 15'$
east of Cape Isachsen
N. Lat. about $79^{\circ} 53'$

June 15, A.M., 1916

This land was first sighted by Karsten Andersen of our party about 4 P.M. June 12 from a point on the ice by the shore lead some 20 miles south-west by west from the hill where this record is left. First landing was made by Harold Noice about 3 A.M. to-day, from our camp on the ice a quarter of a mile offshore. We have this day taken possession of this land, by power especially vested in us for that purpose, in the name of His Majesty King George V, on behalf of the Dominion of Canada, and shall proceed to its further exploration by following the coast to the northward from this monument and later in such other directions as it may lead.

Men, seven dogs, and gear of our party all in good condition. We have so far had no difficulty in securing game for food and have noted no diminution in the number of seals as we go northward.

For the Canadian Arctic Expedition,
VILHJALMUR STEFANSSON,
Commander

Witness:
KARSTEN ANDERSEN
HAROLD NOICE

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Our new discovery, which has since been named Meighen Island, was quite a noisy place. Geese could be heard cackling and honking everywhere inland. It was the nesting-place for the rare Hutchins's goose, and it was fun to watch them. They had their nests on the bare rocks or on gravel; sometimes the nest would be near a large stone. The setting goose would crouch down over the nest and remain motionless, while its mate would fly away a short distance and commence to honk-honk, trying to distract our attention from the nest. These geese have very good protective colouring, and it was difficult to find their nests without using our glasses. We collected a number of eggs and also a specimen skin.

When we first landed the eggs were just right for eating. After we had been on the island a while we would occasionally find a young bird inside an egg, but somehow or other these tasted just as good, probably because our appetites were always keen. We had eggs for breakfast, eggs for luncheon, and eggs at supper-time—boiled eggs, fried eggs, scrambled eggs. North Latitude 80° and fresh eggs to eat! But the greater part of our food was the seal-meat that we had hauled along with us from the floe. The ice surrounding our island was all very old and heavy; consequently it contained very few seals. There were no caribou on the land, although we saw a few old tracks. But as the vegetation was exceedingly sparse, only a little grass, moss, and lichens, these tracks had probably been made by some stray caribou from other lands that had quickly abandoned this place. Clearly we should have to go out to the floe for seals if we were to remain long in this vicinity; otherwise we should soon run out of dog-feed. As for our own food, we could at that season have easily secured enough eggs and birds.

We proceeded first west along the south coast to the south-west corner, then followed its west coast north, mapping as we went, until we reached what was apparently the north-west corner of the island.

One morning, upon awakening we saw to our great surprise

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and delight a beautiful, rugged snowclad land to seaward. Its high mountains with thousands of deep clefts and glacier-covered valleys stood glittering and shining in the bright sunlight. We could hardly believe our eyes. Another new land! We were wild with excitement. The land did not appear to be more than twenty miles away. We took bearings of it, and the Commander wrote out a record to the effect that we were starting at once for this land. We loaded the sledge in a jiffy, and were just about to start when the Commander announced that, after figuring out the variation of the compass, he found that we had been a point out in our calculations. This put our 'new land' on top of Axel Heiberg Land, which was discovered by Sverdrup in 1902—and which had been hidden from us until this morning by foggy weather. When the position was plotted on the chart, Axel Heiberg Land was the only land that this could be.¹

We all sat down and looked foolish. There was a good excuse for our blunder, however, because the weather had until that morning been unsuited to taking observations, and our relation to the magnetic pole was such that a comparatively slight change in our position would produce a large change in the variation. It is rather confusing to be travelling along on a course that is, say, due east by the compass, but in reality may be due west. For we were now nearly north of the magnetic pole, and the north point of the compass needle pointed nearly due south.

The Commander decided not to visit Axel Heiberg Land (because it had already been explored), so we continued on our journey. Although the temperature in the shade seldom rose above 4° below freezing-point, the bare black rocks and windswept gravel bars attracted so much heat that pools of water formed in hollows, especially at the southern bases of the larger rocks. This water came at an opportune time, for our supply of kerosene was getting low.

¹ It is interesting to note that this was the first and only time in our polar experience that we saw glaciers. The reason for this is that glaciers are found only in lands of high altitude and heavy precipitation, while all our travels had been in comparatively low lands.

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It takes almost double the time to cook a meal if you have to melt ice or snow in order to get water.

On June 23 we reached the northernmost point of our island (lat. $80^{\circ} 7'$), and left the following record in a small cairn which we built near by :

June 23, 1916

North Latitude $80^{\circ} 7'$

Meridian distance, $4^{\circ} 43'$ east of Cape Isachsen

We are leaving here to-day. We intend to survey the east side of this land, proceed south perhaps through Hassel Sound or east of Amund Ringnes Island, determine if Findlay Island is part of the land discovered by us in 1915, and survey the south coast or coasts between Findlay Island and Cape Murray. We then intend to pass the remainder of the summer in the land discovered in 1915. If food conditions are favourable we shall probably winter near Cape Murray to prepare a base for the exploratory work of the Expedition to the north and west of that point in 1917.

For the Canadian Arctic Expedition,
VILHJALMUR STEFANSSON,
Commander

Witness :

KARSTEN ANDERSEN
HAROLD NOICE

Here we turned south, and five days later arrived at the south-east corner of our land and headed out across the ice on a course that bore north by north-west by the compass, but that was due south in reality. We were leaving our land. It is only a small chunk of earth and moss-covered rock, surmounted by a snowcap and surrounded by ice; but it is all our own, and I shall always have a soft spot in my heart for it. I suppose the man who invented collar-buttons felt the same way about the first one he made.

CHAPTER XV

THE temperature had been above freezing now for several days, and we had stowed our winter clothing on the sledge and were wearing cloth trousers, light-weight deer-skin shirts, and seal-skin waterproof boots. The snow was becoming so soft and soupy that the runners cut deep into it and the sledge bottom dragged along on top, leaving a toboggan-like trail behind. With every step we broke through slush—more than knee-deep in places—into water. Our seven dogs floundered along up to their bellies. They were the Commander's team, chiefly white men's dogs, which he preferred because they are larger, longer-legged, and generally stronger than Eskimo dogs. To this team he had insisted on adding Hans, the veteran of his ice trips; because on those trips, when the Commander would pick trail in the heavy ice and look back to see how the team was making out, wily Hans, by much barking and leaping, had convinced him that he was a wonderful worker. Charlie and I were mean enough to tell what *we* knew about Hans as a worker; and when Stefansson refused to believe it we waited our chance, and one day, in a very bad piece of going, showed him Hans spread out apparently pulling for dear life—with a slack trace. He had to admit it then, but he hinted darkly that Hans had been spoiled by bad driving. Therefore, let bad driving account for the fact that at the end of a long trip, when the other dogs were lean, Hans was invariably rolling in fat. But in spite of Hans' sins, the truth was we all liked him; for a more affectionate dog never lived. He made work for us in camp as well as on trail, for he had a propensity for burying things that amounted to a mania. One night we left an ovibos-skin out to dry. Hans got loose, and in the morning the

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skin was nowhere to be found. We saw Hans, his nose covered with dirt, eyeing a patch of freshly turned earth and gravel. A prod revealed the corner of our ovibos-hide. Hans looked rather shamefaced, and walked away as if business called him elsewhere. He seldom destroyed things, but he did love to hide them—boots, socks, mitts, anything he found portable. He even tried to bury the Commander's writing-box once. His best chum was Red, a big, yellow, curly dog. Whenever one of these two got into a fight the other always jumped in to help him.

Most of their arguments were with Mike, a heavy-jowled, black and white fellow, who, although he had lost several of his teeth, still wanted to be boss. Poor Mike, he always got the worst of it. Tulugak (the Raven) was as black as coal; his long graceful limbs bespoke power. He was a handsome sight as he leaped forward whenever the sledge stuck—snarling at the dog in front of him as if it were his fault. Buckly was a long-legged bunch of shaggy hair, a bag of fluff who looked as large as any dog in the team. Nellie, our leader, was a lady who walked with rather short circumspect steps; there wasn't a lazy bone in her body.

Comic, my favourite, was a yellow-coated ragamuffin with big yellow eyes. He would rub up against my leg, coaxing me to scratch him, and after I had scratched him on one side he would walk solemnly round and present the other side. If I paid no attention to him he would look up at me expectantly, then suddenly spring up, planting his fore-paws on my chest and try to lick my face. We had great games together. I would lie down on my back and Comic would pounce on top of me and bite and pull at my coat until I commenced to wrestle with him. And jealous!—if I so much as petted another dog he would bark and snarl belligerently at his rival. Perhaps it was because we were such great pals that I always thought him the best dog in the outfit.

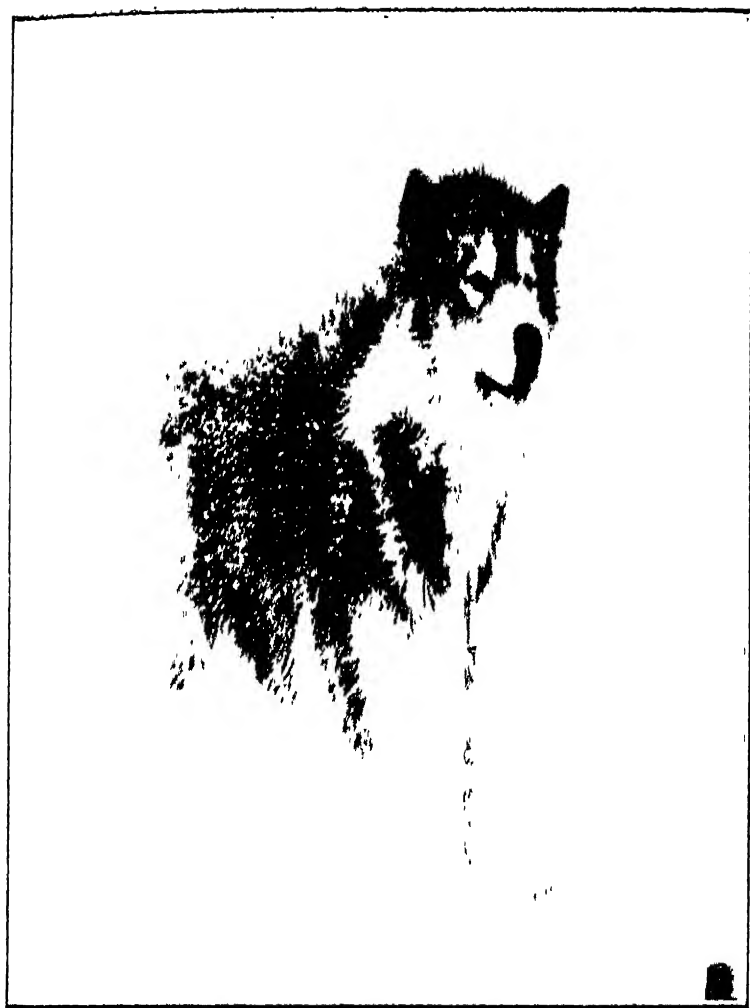
Dogs are, after all, just about as human as men; some are lazy and need an occasional touch of the whip, others

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will work year in and year out without a slack trace. Comic was one of these ; in summer he would carry a load which many a larger dog would refuse.

We were travelling south toward Hassel Sound, which lies between Amund Ringnes and Ellef Ringnes Islands. On July 2 we landed on the north-west corner of Amund Ringnes. A torrent of water was coming down from the land and the ice near this spring freshet was rotten and honeycombed in many places. The weather for the last ten days had been bad—warm, overcast, rainy, snowy. Strange as it may seem, the light on such days is much harder on the eyes than on clear days. We were all more or less snow-blind, and Charlie's eyes especially were in such bad condition that we camped, so that he might rest them. Snow-blindness differs from the popular conception in that one is not struck dark. But the eyes become inflamed and water and pain as if they were full of sand ; and one is blind because one cannot keep them open. The only remedy is to exclude all light, although the pain can be lessened by washing them in a solution of boracic acid.

After a day's rest in camp my eyes troubled me far less than those of my two companions, so I went out to hunt. After walking about five miles inland I caught sight of two caribou. This was my first opportunity of hunting caribou. I tried to put into practice some of the hunting-lore that I had gathered from Stefansson's many lectures. Cautiously I approached from the leeward, keeping behind a small ridge. The caribou were lying down and were very watchful, as they always are in hazy weather. I crawled to within a hundred yards. I probably exposed myself to view when just about ready to shoot, for one of the caribou suddenly jumped up and, as it stood still watching me, I fired. It rolled over. I fired at the other which was on the run, and missed. What of it ? I had killed my first caribou with the first shot. Only I hadn't ! As I walked toward it, it sprang up and bounded away. It was wounded in the side, and I thought I could soon run it down, and so I chased it. I must have chased that poor animal for at least five



NOICE'S FAVOURITE DOG, "COMIC"

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sledge is on top of a hummock and is in danger of sliding off broadside into the water at its base is to turn the bow quickly, so that it will run off the hummock at a right-angle into the centre of the pool. By so doing we found that the sledge would not upset and the top part of the load, consisting of sleeping-bags, bed-skins, writing material, etc., was kept dry.

The next day, while crossing an ice-hummock, the sledge started to slide sideways. I caught it just in time, but one runner was already over the edge of the hummock and into the water. The sledge was tilted at an angle of sixty degrees, and it took all my strength to keep it from upsetting. I called to Charlie, who was leading, and he quickly ran back to help me. We thought that if we started the dogs forward, both of us, standing in the water on the downhill side, could keep the sledge from upsetting until the pool had been passed. But we overestimated our strength. Splash went our sledge, and we with it! We were soaked from head to foot, as was nearly everything we had on the sledge. It was impossible for us to right the sledge with its water-soaked load, and so we had to loosen the lashings and unload our gear in the middle of the water and then pack everything on to an ice island, where we wrung out our clothes and spread things out to dry on top of the sledge and on some boxes in which we carried our Primus stoves and writing materials. Charlie and I looked and felt very much like a couple of drowned rats. The Commander, who was ahead, came back to camp. We all slept in our clothes that night, for our sleeping-bags were impossible. But there is one advantage in having the sunshine continuously for twenty-four hours: all our gear was fairly well dried by the next noon, and we continued our journey.

A few days later Stefansson shot three caribou, the meat of which we liked better than the seal-meat we had been living on. We had now reached a point where, according to the map we carried (Isachsen's), Hassel Sound was only about three miles wide. We found it to be fifteen miles instead.

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While crossing the sound we nearly had an adventure. There was a tide-crack running west from the land ; and, as the going is always comparatively dry along cracks or leads, we followed this one, the Commander going as usual to hunt for seals. The crack soon widened out into a lead some ten or fifteen feet broad. He had been gone for an hour when Charlie and I commenced to follow. We made good speed over the now glare and slippery ice, taking turns at running ahead of the dogs. Suddenly Nellie stopped and smelt the ice. Then all the dogs put their noses to the ice and sniffed. With a bound they raced past Charlie, who was ahead. He had just time to throw himself on top of the sledge as it sped by. Helter-skelter over the ice, parallel to the lead, away we went, the sledge swaying from side to side and bouncing from hummock to hummock, splashing its riotous way through little pools of water and sending clouds of spray flying in all directions. Emerging from a little puddle, we saw upon some crystalline-surfaced ice the tracks of a polar bear, the first we had seen for many a day. No wonder the dogs had lost their heads when they had smelt these tracks on the glare ice a few minutes before ! It was impossible to stop them without upsetting the sledge and running the risk of breaking it, and as the bear's tracks ran along the lead in the direction we were already travelling we let the dogs dash on. Suddenly they swerved to the right, and in an instant had carried us to the very edge of the lead. We overturned the sledge and held back with all our might, as the now crazy dogs tried to follow the tracks which had at this point disappeared in the open lead. It was a rather close squeeze for us.

Not much farther on we came to Stefansson, sitting on top of an ice-hummock beside the end of our lead, which for some unaccountable reason had decided to peter out just when we most needed it. Looking ahead, in the direction we must travel to cross the strait, nothing but water could be seen—thaw water on top of the ice—with the exception of a few isolated humps of ice pushing their rounded backs above its surface, looking very much like

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a few dabs of whipped cream on top of some gigantic floating-island pudding.

The Commander, being used to this kind of going, led the way, and although he seemed to know just where the icy water was the shallowest, nevertheless at times we had to wade for miles through water that reached several inches above our knees. We passed many ice islands, but few large enough to accommodate our tent and sledge, let alone a place for the dogs to lie upon.

At last we found one that was barely large enough for a camp-site. In all directions from this camp we could see nothing but water, water, water. Not even a piece of ice the size of one's hand was visible. However, we knew this did not mean very much, because our ice-hummock was only about six inches above the surface, and so an ice island similar to ours might be only three miles away and yet below our horizon.

It was slow work crossing Hassel Sound. Once, while climbing up on a hummock, our dog-harness broke, and away went the dogs, leaving the sledge to slide backward into the water. We had to splash after them and bring them back to the sledge, and then stop and repair the broken traces. When we finally reached Ellef Ringnes Island the season was so far advanced that it was only in a very few places that we could find ice adhering to the beach, for the greater part of the coastline was now margined by a lead of water, commonly called the 'shore lead.'

We moved our gear ashore, spreading everything out to dry, though we had to keep an eye on the weather. While at this camp we took tidal measurements, similar to those taken at the *Polar Bear* during the previous winter, except that instead of taking them from a hole chopped through the ice we drove a stake into the bottom of the shore lead and waded out at intervals of every ten minutes for thirty hours, to record the depth of water measured on the stake. Each of us took turns taking the measurements.

We headed south along the coast. Every day we noticed here and there, whenever we camped or walked along the

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shore, the tracks of caribou, bears, wolves, and foxes—many more than we had seen on Amund Ringnes Island. But we were much puzzled by another track which kept constantly reappearing. It was such a track as a small dog might make, or a pup wolf. The Commander pointed out that if the small tracks were made by a pup wolf we should also have seen those of its brothers and sisters and parents, for he told us that wolves always travel in families until the young ones are able to take care of themselves. And this track, if it were that of a wolf, must have been made by a mere puppy. Everything indicated, therefore, that it was the track of a small dog. But where could a dog have come from? We were about four hundred miles from the nearest settlement. However, we knew that MacMillan, the Greenland explorer, whose base was some four hundred miles to the east, was endeavouring to locate the so-called 'Crocker Land,' reported by Peary, and which Castel and I had once hoped to find. Was it possible that he could be down in this vicinity, and that one of his dogs had run away from him?

It would be a dramatic meeting if we, who supposed ourselves to be the only human beings within four hundred miles, should come upon MacMillan. As we proceeded south along the east coast of Ellef Ringnes Island the observation of these tracks kept our interest constantly aroused.

Then while crossing a bay we noticed a mound on top of the next point ahead. Was it one made by man, or was it merely an old pressure-hummock? Then we saw something black on the ice a few yards from the end of the point. Our dogs also saw it. They quickened their speed and we all threw ourselves on the sledge, for it was now going too fast to keep up with. The dogs fairly flew along, and soon arrived all in a heap on top of this black thing, which turned out to be the skeleton of a polar bear. We pulled the dogs to one side while the Commander examined it for bullet-wounds, but he could find none. This, however, was not conclusive, for the bear might have been shot through the heart, the bullet passing between its ribs; or, again, this

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might be merely the carcass of a bear that had died a natural death and the dismembered bones which were scattered about might have been torn loose by animals. Our curiosity whetted by seeing the skeleton, we raced on toward the mound ; but before we quite reached it we were greatly elated by seeing boards sticking out of it. Then we came upon more bones and an old felt hat, not much the worse for all weathers. The Commander said, "I'll bet that's MacMillan's old student hat."

CHAPTER XVI

RED pemmican tins, empty, were scattered all about, and as the Commander said that MacMillan had got his pemmican from the same place as we had got ours we were almost certain that this was MacMillan's cairn. Upon closer approach we found the monument to be in a state of 'soupiness,' a box half sunken in a pile of oozing mud. Inside the box was a record in a tin can fastened by bent-over nails. We put up our tent, unhitched the dogs, and did all our work of making camp. Then, when we were all inside, the Commander opened the record.

It was like finding buried treasure. All three of us knelt on the bed-skins, the Commander between Charlie and me, watching with bated breath. The record was written in ink on the Crocker Land Expedition letter-paper, signed by MacMillan, and dated Easter Sunday, April 23, 1916. April 23, 1916! MacMillan had been here only a little less than three months before us.

Easter Sunday, April 23, 1916

Arrived here yesterday on my return from Finlay Land (King Christian Island) to Etah, North Greenland.

Shall leave here to-morrow for Cape Ludvig. From there I shall proceed to North Cornwall, where I hope to find musk-oxen enough to enable me to map east coast as far as Gordon Head.

Expect to arrive Cape South West about May 4th, and Etah June 1st.

Thus far we have killed 13 bears, 13 seals, 16 hare, 2 ptarmigan, and 30 musk-oxen. Have three days' pemmican on our sledges.

I have with me three Eskimos, Nucar-ping-wah, Arklio, and E-took-ah-shos. Have lost eight dogs out of forty-seven, 3 with "piblockto," 3 dropping on trail, and 2 killed by bears. All well.

MACMILLAN

WITH STEFANSSON IN THE ARCTIC

This, then, was the end of our 'dog-wolf' speculations; for although we searched whenever practicable, we saw no more of the interesting 'wolf' tracks—no doubt those we had noticed previous to our finding the cairn were made by one of MacMillan's dogs that had "dropped on trail" and come to life again later on.

Time was getting to be more valuable every day. Each day would bring an added thaw and, as we might have difficulty in reaching our destination before the ice broke up, the Commander wrote out the following record, which we left in place of the original, and next morning we started south across the strait bound for King Christian Island.

July 20, 1916

Arrived here from the north at 8.10 P.M. local time to-day and found a cairn of earth with tins and a wooden box on top. In one corner of the box we found secured by bent nails a Kodak film tin sealed with tape. This contained the following record, written on a letter-head of the Crocker Land Expedition (George Borup Memorial).

[Here follows copy of MacMillan's record.]

We are taking the original of the record and leaving this copy in its place, contained in the same tin from which we removed MacMillan's record. All boards that are here we are taking to use under our bed-skins on the ice; otherwise we are rebuilding the cairn of the tins it contained and enlarging the heap of earth.

We are on our way south from an island that has its north point about North Latitude 80° 10', about 5° of longitude east of Cape Isachsen. We intend to follow the east and south coasts of Findlay Island to determine if it is one land with that discovered by us in 1915 north of Prince Patrick Island. If we knew that MacMillan had finished mapping certain parts of Findlay Island and had omitted others, we would try to do what is left, but for lack of information we may unintentionally duplicate his work.

We intend to spend the summer in the land found in 1915, if we can reach it, putting up meat for sledge provisions for the ice exploration of the spring 1917. Men,

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sledges, and dogs (7) all in good condition, but dog-harness getting rotten from being continually wet.

For the Canadian Arctic Expedition,
VILHJALMUR STEFANSSON,

Witness :

KARSTEN ANDERSEN
HAROLD NOICE

Commander

We only wished that MacMillan had been a little more definite in stating where he had been and what he had accomplished. Here were we intending to cut across to King Christian Island and follow its east coast south to ascertain if it were connected with Findlay Island on the south, and also if it were connected with our Borden Island on the west. The chart showed that the east coast of King Christian Island was mapped in detail for a distance of over fifty miles, and then it was dotted in to connect with Findlay Island, making it appear that King Christian Island and Findlay Island were the northern and southern parts of a single large island. The west coast of this island was, with the exception of a short strip of coastline on the north-western side, entirely unsurveyed. Now we thought it likely that, inasmuch as the northern coast of Borden Island, at the place where Castel and I had left it, trended in an east by south-easterly direction, it would be found to connect with the west coast of King Christian or Findlay Islands. The finding of MacMillan's record saying that he had been to "Finlay Land (King Christian Island)," without giving any details, led us to suppose that he had found the Sverdrup map to be correct, and we decided to pursue our original plan of travelling south along the east coast, then along the south coast, and thence west to Natkusiak's camp on Brock Island.

One of the many drawbacks to travelling at this time of year is the condition of the ice-cracks. In winter cracks form from point to point across bays or from the point of one island to that of an adjacent one. Then the spring thaw liberates thousands upon thousands of gallons of water,

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which rush into these cracks, wearing down their sides and widening them. As the weather gets warmer ice-floes contract, and this contraction widens the cracks still more. Eventually many are so wide that they cannot be spanned by a sledge. One method of crossing such leads is to convert the sledge into a pontoon or boat and ferry the load to the opposite side. Occasionally pieces of ice are found floating in the lead and can be used as ferries. This method of lead-crossing necessitates a considerable waste of time and energy, and when the leads are close together is impractical. Then the procedure is to travel along the edge of the floe in the direction nearest to that one wishes to follow and prospect for a crossing-place. These crossing-places can generally be found within five or seven miles.

When a crack forms it seldom runs in a perfectly straight line. The edges are like the contours of a coastline, with points jutting out and bays in between. When the ice commences to move with a lateral motion, points of ice on opposite sides of a lead are brought into contact. These points of contact form natural bridges over which the sledge can pass safely.

We had scarcely left MacMillan's monument when we struck a lead running in an easterly direction. We followed it for about three miles until we found an ice-bridge, and then, crossing over to the other side, resumed our course for King Christian Island. But we soon struck another lead, and then another, and another, so that our course for the first few days was more southerly than we intended. Then the direction of the leads changed, allowing us to proceed westward.

One night just after we had pitched our tent about fifteen yards from an open lead, and after Stefansson and I had gone inside, Charlie was about to follow us when he noticed something white moving in the water of the lead about two hundred yards from our tent. He thought at first that it was a piece of drifting ice; but when it began to move too rapidly for that he picked up his binoculars to see what it really was. As he was focusing them upon

showing. The bear was heading directly for Stefansson, giving me a quartering view. He was coming so fast that he had covered more than half the distance to us when I fired. At the report of my rifle the beast rolled over, turning a somersault toward us before he stopped, for he was going so fast. Stefansson told me to fire again, as he thought our now frantically barking dogs were in danger should the wounded bear turn toward them. I pulled the trigger, but it would not budge—my gun was jammed. The Commander then put two more shots into him with his Mannlicher-Schoenauer. I found later that sand had become lodged under the rim of my cartridge, preventing it from slipping all the way into the chamber. The Winchester safety device had therefore prevented the hammer from falling when I pulled the trigger—otherwise the gun would have backfired and I might not have been able to tell this story.

After the bear had been killed Charlie started to laugh at me for getting 'buck fever' and hitting the bear in the leg. Now this was the first bear I had ever shot at, and as our Commander had killed plenty during his many years of hunting in the North, he had said I might kill this one. I had determined to be cool and steady and not show my inexperience, but the muzzle of my gun was probably describing wobbly curves when I was about to fire, for my heart was thumping about a hundred to the minute. It was perhaps really a matter of luck whether my bullet hit the bear's head or his feet, or missed him entirely. I knew this, but still I felt sure it was I who had brought the bear down, until the Commander remarked that he also had fired at him. The two guns had gone off so nearly together that neither Charlie nor I knew that he had fired. Now the question arose, who killed the bear? He had been hit in the foreleg and also in the shoulder. As I had never shot at a bear before, Charlie insisted that it was my bullet that had struck him in the leg. But I felt pretty strongly I could not have missed as badly as that. The Commander improved things a good deal by suggesting that when an

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animal is charging, and when you are low down, its paws may well be in a straight line with its heart. It was even possible that the same bullet might have passed through the paw and later lodged in the shoulder. His final verdict was that for purposes of record it might as well be considered 'my bear.'

I have since killed a number of polar bears, but none of them have seemed to me so large or so ferocious as that one. None of them ever had the "wicked, pig-like eyes" and "yellow-fanged, snarling muzzle" of my first bear, which when dead presented an entirely different appearance. It turned out to be a rather small two-year-old.

The bear-meat tasted pretty good, but as we were using our Primus stove for cooking we could not afford much fuel, and so we had to cut up the meat into chunks of about a half to three-quarters of an inch square. Meat when so cut up will cook in a very few minutes, and it never took us more than seven minutes to cook a meal. We used to cut up the meat intended for our breakfast and leave it just outside the tent flap upon an empty box, where it would be handy for us to get at in the morning. One morning we were awakened by a most peculiar noise, and we wondered what it was. It came *rat, tat, tat*, a sound somewhat like that of a typewriter.

Our dogs were quiet and there was no wind. *Peck, peck, peck, peck*. It started again. We peeped out, and there, standing on top of our box and round the plate of meat, were three large white gulls, simply gorging themselves. They had devoured our breakfast, and when we startled them it was all they could do to flap heavily away. They didn't go very far—probably they couldn't. They settled down on top of an ice-hummock and went to sleep. Our meat plate was nearly empty; all the fine kidney fat had been eaten, only a few pieces of lean meat being left. Charlie hurled down maledictions on the heads of those robbers as he dressed to go out to the sledge to cut up more meat for our breakfast.

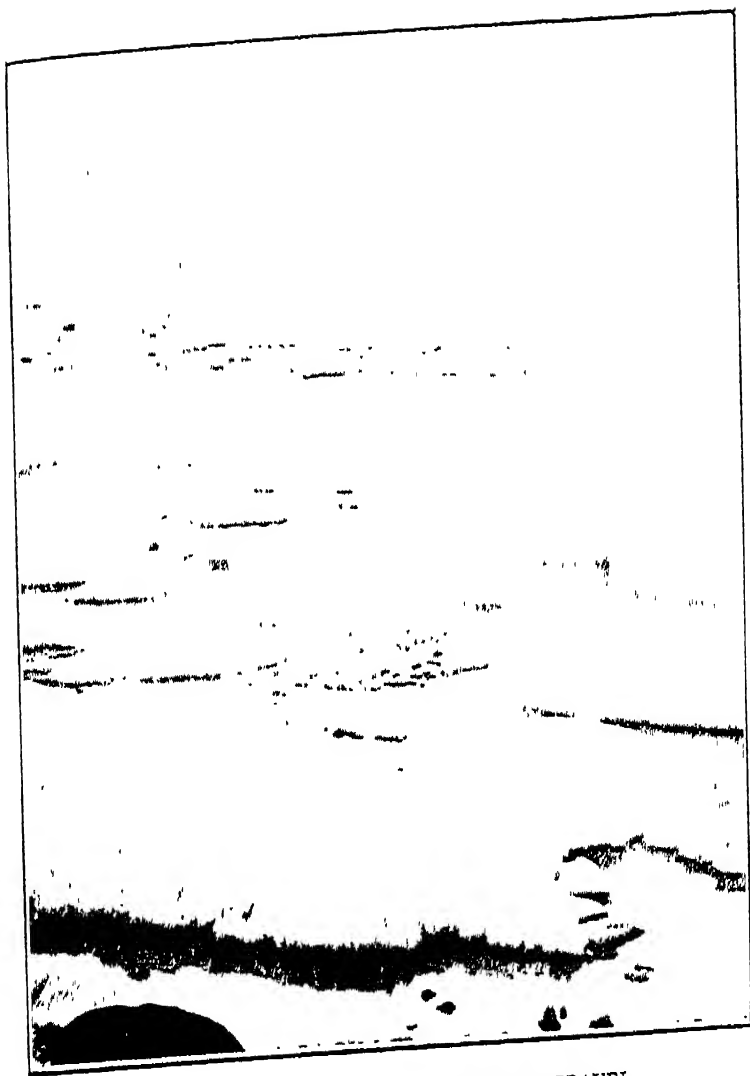
Now that the leads permitted us to travel in a westerly

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direction we momentarily expected to see land, for we were (according to the chart) right where land was supposed to be. When the weather, which had been overcast and hazy, cleared, sure enough we found ourselves quite close to land. We travelled toward it, but a half-mile-wide shore lead prevented our landing, so we camped on the ice. Contrary to all expectation, this land appeared to be small and we were apparently just off its southernmost tip. Where our map showed a big land extending to the north, west, and south of our position, we saw only heavy old, water-covered ice-floes with just this little island to the north. MacMillan's record was now incomprehensible. It stated that he had been to "Finlay Land (King Christian Island)," but we found here no 'land,' except a tiny island. After talking matters over we came to the conclusion that we must be in the mouth of a very deep uncharted bay whose bottom and southern side were bounded by low land. If this were so MacMillan would be right after all, for under these conditions we might not be able to see land from our position. So, acting on this supposition, we commenced to travel west into this bay.

Two days later, we had passed the west end of the island to the north. To the west and south nothing but ice could be seen. We had now crossed this supposedly great land and had found it to be buried under some hundred fathoms of salt water.

As a result of this inaccuracy of the charts we now found ourselves out at sea on nearly impassable ice. If we had known these conditions existed we could have made other arrangements—but as it was, we were in for it. Our experiences in crossing Hassel Sound had been none too pleasant. There we had found that the water on top of the ice sometimes reached two inches above the knee, but here we found ourselves wading in water up to our hips. And our poor dogs were, of course, forced to swim. The weather turned cold, ice formed on top of all this water, and we had to break through quarter- and half-inch ice all day long. The spray froze on the dogs' fur, coating them with ice, and we were soaking wet to the skin from morning



LOOSE, BROKEN ICE—DANGEROUS TO TRAVEL

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till night. It was only rarely that we could find an ice island large enough for a camp-site. For the most part they were small, and their tops were rounded like loaves of bread, except that their sides instead of being straight were undercut from the action of the waves and wind, so that they really resembled mushrooms. The shape and size of these islands made it imperative for us to travel in the troughs between, but the few islands we did find large enough to travel over (ten to twenty yards long) only served as a place for the dogs to shake themselves and to make them pull back when urged to enter the icy water on the other side.

Several times while ascending these islands our dog-harness, which had now through constant immersion become rotten, broke and we had to mend it. When one's hands are all soft and chapped and tender from weeks of working in water, it is pretty cold work to sew thick webbing together while sitting in the open on top of an ice-cake. During this time, owing to the needle ice, we had to tie canvas or seal-skin boots on all our dogs' feet every morning and remove them again at night—twenty-eight little jobs morning and night. The term 'needle ice,' by the way, is highly descriptive. The surface of the ice was in many places of crystalline formation, and the crystals were as sharp as needles. This condition is brought about by long-continued thawing of fresh-water ice or old sea-ice.¹

Our own heavy boots, soled with the hide of the bearded seal, were quickly worn through, and each night before going to sleep we would sew patches on them. I don't know what we should have done if we hadn't had the boards and empty sacks we found at MacMillan's cairn. These we put underneath our bedding, and so kept our sleeping-bags fairly dry and comfortable. It was no wonder that our dogs shivered and protested against entering the water each morning. They really had the worst time of it, oftentimes swimming through the icy water in daytime and sleeping on the bare, wet ice at night.

The condition of the ice was such that we found we could

¹ Thawing salt ice never becomes crystalline.

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advance no farther in a southerly direction. Not only were the western floes impassable, but the southern ones were as bad. There was nothing to do but retrace our way. On July 30 we reached the lead we had left some days before, and camped not far from where we had killed the bear. The next day we turned southward, travelling along the lead where (the surface of the ice being drained) the going was much better than we had had heretofore. But somehow or other it seemed as if Fate had a grudge against us, for now that we were out of the region of deep wading a rain-storm hit us. By camping-time our skin coats were all soppy and weighed a ton. We wrung them out as best we could, but they were clammy things to put on next morning.

Things were beginning to look rather blue. In the first place, we could not get seals—not because we saw none, for, on the contrary, we saw many each day. We shot a number of them as they swam in the water of the lead, but they all sank. It was tantalizing. The Commander shot one, and then ran opposite to where it sank and leaned over the edge of the ice, looking down into the water. We could see the carcass floating, belly up, some eight feet below; then it was carried under the ice by the current. Too bad!

We also saw seals lying on the ice. But the favourable time for hunting was past. There were no pressure-ridges to serve as cover, and so the only method of stalking them was to crawl up to them in plain sight and play seal. In the spring we had used this method with great success. In fact, the Commander got on the average three out of four seals he tried for. The main condition for a successful seal-hunt of this kind is that the seal should never hear one move and should never see one do anything a seal would not do.

During the summer the surface of the ice (even the so-called 'good travelling ice') is covered with pools of water. The hunter must therefore crawl along on his belly through water in places up to his neck. Apart from the discomfort of lying out full length in ice water, many of the holes are so deep that the hunter disappears from sight. If a seal

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sees an object first on top of the ice and then when it looks again finds that the thing has disappeared, it will become very suspicious. But when the mystified seal hears this object splash about there is only one result—it plunges into its hole or into the lead, as the case may be, without any further question, for he knows that no seal would ever do such hocus-pocus tricks as these. Hunting under these conditions is, to say the least, uncertain.

Our only other source of food-supply was a stray polar bear. So far we had killed only one, and there remained of its meat food for but three days. However, in three days we might reach land, or we might get another bear, and there was always the possibility of a seal. Since all westerly advance was now out of the question, we decided to travel south to Findlay Island. Although the maps had been wrong with regard to King Christian Island, we thought there must at least be some land where Findlay Island was charted, and wherever there is land there is nearly always game of some kind.

On August 2 we sighted land, which appeared to be about twenty miles distant to the west by south-west. We abandoned our friendly lead where the going was 'fairly dry,' and once more commenced to wade, heading for what appeared to be Findlay Island—at least, its position corresponded roughly to that marked on the chart.

We had not travelled far on our new course when two other islands came into view, a little to the left of the large one. But from where we were it was impossible to tell whether one island was larger than the other; a high island would seem close and large and a low island would seem small, while they might really prove to be just the opposite. It was good to see land once more and all our discomfort was forgotten.

August 4 brought us to the largest of the islands, but we had to forgo the pleasure of camping on it because of the wide shore lead. While Charlie and I pitched camp on the ice the Commander walked along the edge of the lead and finally found a place where he managed to land.

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While he was away we fed the last of our meat to the dogs, for we knew what the Commander could do. Sure enough, after several hours we heard *Boom! Boom! Boom!* and then more shots. But they came from the direction of one of the small islands. The next day we moved camp over to the meat. Seven fat bull caribou! The sun was shining brightly, the birds were singing, and the green land was dotted with flowers. How the dogs liked to roll and stretch themselves on dry land! This was the first time they had been ashore since leaving Ellef Ringnes Island. This camp was on the smallest of the three islands. The Commander, after landing on the large one, had seen these caribou from a hilltop and had crossed over the intervening three miles and shot them. We should have made a permanent summer camp on the large island had we not seen a still larger one beyond. This new island was low (about 200 feet), but extended to the north-west as far as we could see. It was therefore a better place than the smaller island (from a hunter's viewpoint), because small islands, as a rule, cannot support a large number of caribou.

The ice between the islands was old and hummocky, and as we could not afford to risk breaking the sledge by hauling all the meat we removed the bones from it and loaded up with boneless meat only. We did not know how plentiful game would be on the new island, and so thought it best to take as much food as possible. It was not a question of weight. In summer when the ice is free from snow one can haul a ton without much trouble, but it is difficult to prevent the sledge from going too fast. When descending ice islands it is apt to plunge off hummocks, splash through the water at their bases to the glare ice, and break a runner. As it was we had a number of narrow escapes, even with the light load we were carrying. In fact, we were finally forced to go ashore at a place that was not as well situated, from a hunting standpoint, as a summer camp should be.

When one is living off the country and is about to establish a hunting-camp the chief requisite is a place from which game may be hunted in as many directions as possible.

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the dogs as soon as they should swim to land. The dogs, however, were reluctant to enter the water, so I pushed them in one after another, while Charlie, who was then about half-way across, whistled to them to encourage them to follow. The dogs saw him and commenced swimming toward him. Charlie then paddled on toward the beach. But he had underestimated the speed of the dogs, and before he reached land they had caught up with him. It was in vain that he tried to get them to swim on, for they had decided to ride the remaining distance with him.

Then commenced a battle royal, for bright-eyed Comic and grinning Red had planted their forepaws on one side of the boat. Charlie had almost beaten them off when he found himself sinking and his little boat on the verge of capsizing, for big Mike, Tulugak, and Buckly were trying to climb aboard on the opposite unguarded gunwale. Charlie swung his spade aloft and brought the flat of it down on the heads of his would-be passengers several times before he convinced them that his was not an excursion boat. They got even with Charlie by shaking water all over him when he landed. Then they made a rush for inoffensive old Hans, who was rolling about on his back in the turf, but Red stood up for his chum, and before long all were engaged in a free fight. As soon as Charlie had got them quieted down and tied up he paddled over to the ice, where I had been temporarily marooned, and putting aboard the last of our belongings we went ashore together.

In all we had made ten trips. We pitched the tent and spread out our things to dry, for the sun was shining brightly, and just fourteen hours after we had commenced the ferrying we put a pot of meat on to boil—our first meal since breakfast. The pot had not yet boiled when we sighted the Commander bringing a heavy load of fine fat, juicy caribou-meat home to this, our first camp on the new land.¹ It was the end of a perfect (but strenuous) day.

¹ This land, which we then called Third Land, has since been named Loughheed Island.

CHAPTER XVII

THE next morning Charlie and I took Red, Mike, and Tulugak into the hills to fetch home a load of meat from the carcasses of the six caribou that the Commander had killed the day before. We had a great time with these dogs. They pulled us all over the country—stopping to smell and sniff at each little mound or rock we came to, then tugging ahead with all their might. How they did enjoy it—their first journey on dry land for many a day! Every once in a while they would stop and roll about in the tall green grass that fringed the creek-banks. They lapped up great quantities of the sparkling water—as if they hadn't already had enough water during the summer to last them all their lives!

Suddenly Tulugak jerked the chain out of my hand and made a few great leaps off to one side, pouncing with both front feet upon something that he quickly gobbled up. We thought he had swallowed it, but we soon saw a lemming in his mouth. He gave it up, and Charlie put it in his pocket and brought it back to camp, where he put it into a can of alcohol. Even dogs at times are good zoological collectors.

When we reached the place where the meat was the dogs wanted to eat it then and there, but we didn't let them have very much, because each had to carry sixty or seventy pounds back to camp, and dogs, like men, cannot do very heavy work on full stomachs. It may seem that a back-load of sixty or seventy pounds would be more than any dog could manage. It is more than the average dog can carry very far, but these three animals were exceptionally large and strong, and a seventy-pound pack was not too much for them to carry the six miles back to camp.

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Stefansson told us that Leader, one of his dogs, who had died during the previous winter, could carry a hundred-pound pack for miles without faltering. The average Eskimo dog, however, cannot take much more than a thirty-pound pack ten miles a day on a long trip, or a fifty-pound one five or six miles.

Needless to say, it took us about twice the time to walk back to camp. Just as we were walking up the knoll where our tent was pitched we noticed our sledge covered with something red and, knowing that we had no red cloth, we could not imagine what it was. But we soon caught sight of the Commander with a butcher knife in one hand and a long strip of bright red in the other—he had been cutting up our meat into long, narrow, thin slices, which he had hung up all over the sledge to dry. Now that we were to spend the summer, or what was left of it—for it was now August 10—here we should have to put up dry meat for sledge travel during the coming autumn, because in the autumn the days are short, and we should not have time for much hunting.

The next day I fetched another load of meat, while Stefansson and Charlie cut up that which we had brought the day before.

Upon landing we had taken observations, and we continued to take them morning, noon, and afternoon whenever the sun was not obscured by clouds, or unless the wind was strong enough to shake the mercury in the artificial horizon.

On August 13 the ice shifted about a hundred feet farther offshore, and commenced to move parallel along the land. We thanked our lucky stars that we had got ashore in time. But, contrary to our expectations, the ice did not go more than three hundred yards offshore. Soon it started to snow, and before long everything was white again. We went to sleep wondering how long this snow would last. Toward morning I was awakened by a nudge in the side and opened my eyes in time to see a flash of white scoot out through the tent flap. I parted the flap

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and looked out and there, not ten feet away, was Stefansson standing barefooted on the snow. A band of frightened caribou were dashing madly away. The Commander knelt down in the snow and started to fire at them, but by that time they were out of range.

He had jumped up as soon as he had heard the dogs barking, awakening me as he scooted out. We saw by the tracks that the caribou had passed within five yards of our sledge. It was hard luck that they should have escaped after coming right down into our camp with an invitation, so to speak, to be shot. I mention this incident partly because it illustrates a phase of our life that is typical. Whenever one of us heard anything unusual going on outside the tent at night he would always jump up immediately without stopping to dress. One reason for this is that when dogs get into a fight they can quickly disable one another unless they are separated almost instantly. Also if a polar bear has invaded the camp he will quickly make short work of some of the dogs.

Next morning the sun came out bright and warm, quickly dissipating the premature snowfall. We now started another set of tidal observations, which we kept up for thirty consecutive hours.

On August 18 the Commander and Charlie went off on a four-day exploration, leaving me to guard camp and take observations, so as to determine the rates of our watches. To shield the artificial horizon from wind, I took my noon observations of the sun in the doorway of the tent, which faced south—south where lived men and women and scientific societies to whom these observations, taken by a lone youngster lying flat on his stomach on a new isle in latitude $77^{\circ} 9' 30''$ North, would some day be of value.

77° North; and between me and the shore lead—where a mother eider-duck and her young brood swim and cluck contentedly—stretches a soft green carpet of grass and moss. Wild flowers, like tiny sweet-peas, blue and pink and purple, bloom along the brook close by and run before the breeze toward the first low hill to lose their identity

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there in a fluttering wisp of lavender. White and yellow butterflies pursue them. Beetles and ants tumble in and out of the crevices in the moss wall of their world. Long-legged water-bugs sport in the brook, and myriads of little red bugs in the small lakes. A spider of the daddy-long-legged variety crawls on to the glass front of the artificial horizon and measures himself impudently beside the sun. Why not? Midgets, whether spiders or Arctic explorers, may have their legitimate ambitions to measure themselves against immensity—even though, as in the case of daddy-long-legs, some force ruthlessly brushes them aside.

Behind the low ridges is a high hill, which we call Look-out Hill; from it we can see the three near-by islands of our group and the outlines of Bathurst Island blue in the distance. Like ours, they are unpeopled save by caribou, wolf, and little lemming.

There are evidences that our new isle is new in a geological sense also. But new and old, time and distance, are merely words. Only sea and sky have memories long enough to remember the birth of Loughheed; and only its own sod knows when came the caribou and their foeman, the wolf, two animals so ancient that Palæolithic man sketched them beside the mastodon on his cave walls in France. Night and day also are words which here at least lose their ordinary significance. Summer is counted not in months, but in weeks; but, because the sun shines all of the twenty-four hours, the sod is spattered with flowers, although the highest temperature registered at Loughheed was 8° above freezing—like an invigorating spring day in New York. Sunlight rather than warmth being the special need of plants, Arctic flowers grow twice as fast as those in more temperate climates.

And more than words lose significance here. The white man's customs go the way of the mist. The world of newspapers, business, telephones, ballot-boxes, and jazz seems in memory no more real than his dream does to the sleeper awakened. Is it possible that somewhere there are people even now being ostracized by their kind for eating
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olives with a fork or peas with a knife? People who judge a man by his grooming, his bank account, or his ancestry? Here is a world as new to us as virgin Earth was to the sons of Adam; a new and vast world with three men in it, the first men. The sons of Adam had a common ancestry, but not we. A Canadian, a Dane, and an American, we come from under three flags and we know nothing of one another's pedigrees. It doesn't matter. Our new world has stripped us to the fundamentals; and it is salutary, if not a little humbling, to reflect that these fundamentals—intelligence, character, and health—are not peculiarly human, that they are the same with men, with horses, with dogs, and with the ants.

To unite us we have a great adventure and its problems, our dependence on one another, our mutual friendship with the dogs, and our isolation, which is not loneliness. And for combat—which no man escapes, nor should wish to escape—we have the fight with Nature. It is a fight that calls for much the same mental qualities *plus* physical energy as a combat with human will and treachery; but it does not disgust. We may lose, but we cannot also be robbed. We shall have done that which cannot be taken away from us, not though we lie fathoms deep under sea-ice—a bed whose comfort, by the way, none of us has any notion of testing, even for purposes of rhetoric. We shall have told again the most inspiring tale throughout all ages—the tale, I think, those cherubim with the flaming sword before Eden's gates were telling—New Land Beyond! New Land—which shall be man's land some day, when men grow to its requirements, as they grew to the measure of one wild frontier after another in the westward push from the Appalachians to the Pacific.

It was during these four days alone that I had my first vague dreams about becoming a scientific explorer, instead of merely an adventurer out for excitement. I reviewed in a new light all that I had learned of Stefansson's career and aims, got my first real glimpse of his bigness—and suffered an acute attack of hero-worship. When he and

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Charlie returned I told him modestly that I also would go forth and do as he had done ! I don't remember what he said, probably something sarcastic—he is too witty to be able to help that sort of thing. But if he did I am sure I wasn't much disturbed by it. We three had been alone together now for nearly a month, and I was beginning to get my own ideas about Stefansson.

My ideas were not the same as those of the men at Herschel or on the *Polar Bear* ; but I could understand theirs. Gonzales and Seymour had reason to scorn him. Stefansson *could not* “ sharpen his own knife ” efficiently. He couldn't tie sailors' knots ; he couldn't even *learn* how to tie them when I tried to teach him ; he could harness dogs, but he hated to do it ; and he was wellnigh helpless with a needle. Our clothes and boots needed patching frequently now. I could attend to mine fairly well ; but, with all due respect to my Commander, I am obliged to say that he was an uncommonly poor seamstress. Charlie, who really sewed beautifully, had to take pity on him. I had a suspicion that his inefficiency in uninteresting things was pure guile ; if he never learned how to do them he would not have them to do !—and he always had white men or Eskimos with him who could do them. But then, when I was on my own expedition later my Eskimos probably found me also very inefficient in drudgery.

On the whole, we had a pretty good time on Loughheed. If we had only had enough fuel we should have had a glorious time, but Loughheed Island—which, by the way, my companions reported to be about forty miles long, with an average width of twelve miles, and well stocked with game—is unique in that it contains no ordinary fuel, such as willow, heather, etc. I know of no other Arctic island of its size that does not contain enough fuel to supply the needs of a hunting-camp.

Our feelings at seeing all the fine, fat caribou-heads, briskets, backbones, etc., going to waste for want of fuel with which to cook them, were like those of penniless little boys standing in front of a sweet-shop window, gazing

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wistfully at all the goodies just inside. Not that we were ever hungry—far from it. We always had an abundance of meat. But we had to cut it up into little cubes so that it would cook quickly.

It may strike the reader that there is a good deal in this book about food; and furthermore that all the romantic yearning which the "Man of the Great Spaces" should properly feel as he wanders lonely, "communing with Nature," *ad lib. ad naus.*, is in this writer attached to the idea of food. I admit it; but let us analyse. In the city a man goes three times a day to a restaurant for his sustenance. In other words, his food is always at hand. But in the North he must first go out and stalk it; for it is a live thing, tenacious of its life, and swift, and cunning to take every advantage of fog, wind changes, and other tricks which Nature plays upon the hungry hunter. The hunt which sharpens his wits also sharpens his appetite—and makes him more than king. For the bit of caribou-brisket in his cooking-pot at the day's end is the romance of craft successful, of labour rewarded, and of desire achieved; it is the low, bubbling war-song of man the conqueror; it is the restorer of his vitality, without which he cannot march his long miles to-morrow in the race with thawing ice-floes—and it is food, delicious food!

We were certainly grateful to MacMillan for having left so many boards at his cairn on Ellef Ringnes Island. These, as noted before, had been of great service to us, first, while out on the ice, in keeping our bedding from coming in contact with the wet ice; and second, now that we were on dry land, by giving us something with which to make a fire. We cut each board into pieces about five or six inches square. We allowed one square, as fuel, to each meal. We split it into kindling, put it into the five-gallon coal-tin which we used as a stove, and covered it thickly with caribou fat. We usually had only one cooked meal a day, eating dry meat for the others, because we did not know how long we might have to remain on the island before the sea-ice was strong enough for travel.

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By August 30 the nights were beginning to get dark, and the night air crisp and keen. I remember one such night particularly. Charlie and I were returning from a caribou-kill. The moon was up and the stars were shining, now bright and now dull, as long, wavering beams of a pale green aurora wavered and flashed across the sky. It was as if ten thousand giant searchlights had come between us and the stars.

Not a breath of air was stirring; the ground was hard and white with frost. A thin sheet of ice spread over tiny lakes and ponds. To our delight the freeze-up was coming! Soon we should be on our way once more, dashing along over snow-covered ground and ice to rejoin our companions, many of whom we had not seen for six months. I don't know what it was—the beautiful night, the thought of travelling, or just the sheer joy of being alive and in such good spirits—but Charlie and I commenced to sing and whoop and whistle as we swung along. It must have been long past midnight and we must have made quite a racket, for upon approaching the camp we could distinguish a tiny red glare beside the tent and the shadow of a man stretched out full length beside it. Good old Stef! As we came up to him he leaned forward and blew the embers into a merry little blaze, his rugged, bewhiskered face all aglow, and his keen blue eyes sparkling with pleasure. He said: "Boys, I heard you singing and couldn't resist the temptation to celebrate," and then he lifted the cover off the pot. A cloud of savoury vapour went up into the clear night air—and our nostrils. The pot-lid served as a platter upon which the Commander dished out with our solitary fork the brimming contents—bones at last!

Delicious bones! Fat ribs of caribou, briskets, vertebræ, and juicy tongues! It was our first feast of real 'hunter's choice cuts' for many a day. And how we did enjoy it as we sat and feasted round our little stove, its red embers gradually growing dimmer! It had taken an extra day's allowance of fuel to do this, and it might mean that we should have to camp out some night without a fire, but

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coast of sound to about $78^{\circ} 8'$. Crossed sound (about 15 miles wide) and mapped west coast sound southward. Stopped for thirty hours' tidal observations, July 18-19, near N. Lat. $78^{\circ} 4'$. Some thirteen miles south of here we found a cairn and record of the MacMillan Expedition written by MacMillan, April 23, 1916. He was then on his way from King Christian Island to North Cornwall by way of Cape Ludvig. He reports his party all well. Proceeded from here to King Christian Island. Found its most southerly point to be about N. Lat. $77^{\circ} 41'$, about $3^{\circ} 33'$ east of Isachsen. The coast trends north of west from there, and the west tip of the island is probably not over fifteen miles more westerly. Were prevented from landing or going farther west by open leads and water on ice. Proceeded southerly and landed on Findlay Island August 4th. The next day moved to the new island between Findlay and Paterson to get some deer-meat, and August 8th proceeded to this place where we decided to await the freeze-up. Findlay and Paterson Islands first sighted August 3rd, and this island August 5th. Findlay Island is also separated from this by a tiny island. Have explored this island about twenty miles north by north-west and find its main axis runs about north-west by north. The west end of Bathurst Island bears from here about twelve magnetic. Are leaving here by sledge to-day overland by first adequate snow. Shall leave this island as soon as ice conditions allow and shall proceed according to circumstances to Cape Murray on the west side of the land discovered last year to Melville Island, Liddon Gulf, to look for Storkerson's party or messages from him. Have instructed *Polar Bear* to try to reach Winter Harbour to spend there winter 1916-17, or at Dealy Island. Men, equipment, and dogs (7) all well.

Have taken formal possession of this land for the Empire on behalf of Canada in the name of His Majesty King George V, according to authority especially vested in me for that purpose.

VILHJALMUR STEFANSSON
September 3, 1916

Witness:

HAROLD NOICE
KARSTEN ANDERSEN

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We started off with enthusiasm, travelling overland toward the northern end of our island, mapping the west coast as we went. Our dogs were all in the very pink of condition (a little too fat, if anything), and they seemed glad to get into the harness once more. But we did not make very long days, for our load was heavy, and as we did not wish to feed any of our precious dry meat to the dogs while we could get game, we shot caribou along the way, camping at our kills each night.

When we had reached a spot about half-way up the west coast we ran into a very sandy country. The water in the creeks had a peculiar flavour, a sweetish taste, reminding one of alum, and in some of the creeks this flavour was so strong as to make the water almost undrinkable.

We were not the only ones leaving the island. Our summer co-campers, the king eider and old squaw ducks, were also on their way to more southerly regions. The snow-buntings and gulls, always being the first birds to arrive and the last to leave, had not yet departed. Some of the owls would probably stay all winter, and perhaps the few ptarmigan as well.

The weather continued cold, with frequent snow-squalls, and the shore lead soon froze over hard enough to travel upon. It was all glare ice, for the water in the lead was almost fresh, at least the upper stratum of it was. As mentioned before, salt-water ice seldom freezes with a smooth glossy surface, and so can be readily distinguished from that of fresh water. Although the ice of the shore lead was strong enough to carry our sledge, the ice covering the many fresh-water ponds and lakes on top of the old hummocky sea-ice was as yet too thin, and we had to delay several days before it was safe to venture out upon it.

It may seem peculiar that the shore lead ice was stronger than the ice of these lakes on the sea-ice, but the heavy snowfall had covered the lakes, insulating them from the cold, and, while the same amount of snow fell on the shore

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lead, it was quickly blown across its glare surface to the other side, thereby giving the ice underneath a chance to freeze thicker.

On September 9, finding the ice offshore to be passably strong, we headed west across the strait, bound for Border Island.

CHAPTER XVIII

IT was hard work crossing the strait. There was so much soft snow on the ice that the sledge at times sank down to the toboggan bottom and the dogs got stuck. Their feet found no hold on the glass-like ice under the snow of these sea-lakes and kept slipping from under them. Many a hard bump Charlie and I got as we tried to pull on the sledge and keep our footing at the same time. The Commander led the way, prospecting with his light ice-chisel every few feet to see if the ice were strong enough. Most of these lakes were not over two and a half or three feet deep, so there really wasn't any great danger, except that if our load of dry meat and caribou-skins should get wet at this time of year we should have to throw most of the skins away. It would have been impossible to haul them if they became saturated with water, for we had no means of drying anything.

It took us seven days to make the fifty miles across the strait to Borden Island, and, while the ice of the sea-lakes was now quite strong enough, we found that the shore lead on the opposite side was still rather dangerous. The reason was that at this lead the ice had apparently moved quite a distance offshore in the summer, and by so doing had made enough open water for waves to form and stir up the fresh thaw water with the brine of the sea. As salt water always freezes at a lower temperature than fresh, this ice was not nearly so strong as that we had just travelled over.

The Commander selected what appeared to be the strongest ice, and, even though he knew it to be rather dangerous, took a chance and tried to cross the lead. He led the dogs at a run. Charlie stayed behind the sledge to one side

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(so as to make the total weight on the ice as light as possible), while I steered. We were nearly across when the ice broke and the stern of the sledge commenced to settle. The dogs stopped. I shouted to the Commander, and he grabbed the leader's harness and pulled ahead on it, calling the dogs.

I abandoned the stern, and ran up to the bow and tried to lift it up on the ledge that had been formed by the ice breaking. But our load was heavy and I could not lift it. Charlie, thinking he might cause the sledge to sink deeper if he were to come too close, made no effort to help me. The sledge commenced to sink.

Then the Commander gave us, the dogs, and the virgin North the shock of our lives. He cursed. Those once calm, dulcet tones pierced the atmosphere with a raucous yell and with strong words not included in any vocabulary of science.

" — — — — —, Charlie! Hurry up and help Noice start the sledge!"

Charlie jumped as if shot and came running to me. Our combined efforts were rewarded by the sledge starting forward, and in a few seconds it was out of danger.

We had travelled with Stefansson a good many hundred miles and we had been in a number of tight places together, but we had never heard him swear, no matter how badly anything turned out. In fact, we had come to believe that there was nothing that could happen on land or sea that could disturb that imperturbable calm. It was no wonder that Charlie had jumped.

This phenomenon remained unexplained for seven years —until January 1923, when one night, over our coffee, after my return from my own expedition, I reminded him of it.

"Ah," said he, "I had to make Charlie move quickly; and I knew that that was the way to do it. So, like all successful feats of exploration, Noice, it was due to the calm processes of reason." Maybe.

The day had been foggy, with intermittent snow-squalls, but the weather cleared for a short time after we had

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crossed the lead and we saw to the north of us a large bay. The land rose quite rapidly until it reached a height of about eight hundred feet, some two miles inland. We saw upon landing one fresh fox-track and one old caribou-track in the snow.

The next day we turned southward. Stefansson hunted inland parallel to us as we travelled along the coast on the ice. We camped that night about eighteen miles from our morning camp. The reason for our slow progress was that huge quantities of mud and sand had been blown out on the ice, making it difficult at times to tell where the land stopped and the ice began. We were prevented from going offshore and travelling on the sand-free ice by the shore lead, the ice of which was still too weak to be safe. We stopped at every point while I took bearings to the next point ahead and also to any conspicuous hills or other topographical features. I also made a rough sketch of the coastline.

When the Commander got to the tent that evening he had a story of hard luck to tell. He had seen five caribou, and while stalking them had startled three others that had been concealed from him in a ravine. The three, being badly scared, had run away as he approached the other five, which heard him at five hundred yards and did not stop running until they were five miles distant. The Commander said that he could have followed them, but as the country was stony and the distance we should have to haul the meat was too far he had let them go.

On September 19 we arrived at the south tip of Borden Island, and turned northward, following the west coast. Game was getting scarcer and scarcer, and so far we had killed none, with the exception of one caribou and one wolf which the Commander had shot. As this meat was too far away for fetching with the sledge (the ground being stony), he had carried fifty pounds of it back to camp. But this was quickly eaten up.

The fuel-supply, consisting of some fat and the MacMillan boards, was also getting low. When we started out on

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the morning of September 20 we had but fifteen pounds of food left, and we were still about sixty miles from Brock Island, where we expected to find Natkusiak and his party.

The Commander told us as he started out on his hunt that morning that when we made camp in the evening, if he didn't return before dark, we were to feed some of our deer-skins to the dogs. Charlie and I waited half an hour or so before we loaded the sledge and followed, so as to give the Commander a chance to go inland and keep abreast of us. But on this day Stefansson, instead of walking inland immediately upon leaving us, followed north along the coast. It was fortunate he did so, for after travelling about for three miles we saw what appeared to be a high pole standing upon the land, and going over to investigate we found a log of driftwood lying about fifty yards from the ice. It was the only piece of driftwood we had seen during the last 1500 miles of travel. Charlie and I measured it and found it to be twelve feet in circumference and seventy-five feet long—quite a big log for these latitudes. Unfortunately it was rotten and wet and full of sand. But the tips of the roots were dry and these we broke off and took along with us. They came at an opportune moment.

The Commander had found this log and had stood up on end a long piece which he had broken off; otherwise we might have passed by without seeing it. We travelled on, and camped about sixteen miles north of the log. When it got dark, according to instructions, we fed some of the caribou-skins to the dogs.

It may appear rather cold-blooded of us to have sat quietly in our tent while the Commander was still absent. But we had standing orders from Stefansson never to go in search of him unless he were more than fifteen hours overdue, as, of course, if he saw caribou just before dark he might decide to wait till dawn before approaching them; and by this time we had perfect confidence in his ability to take care of himself.

Stefansson got in about 9.30 with a heavy back-load of

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meat, and was rather put out to find that we had fed the skins to the dogs. He said he would have arrived before dark had he seen our tracks, but upon reaching the coast he had failed to find them.

As a rule we pitched our tent in a conspicuous place—either near a point or out on level ice where, because it was black, it would show up against a white background ; but in travelling during the day we always took that course which seemed to offer the best going—generally on the shore lead close to the land. Whenever we came to a deep bay we would cross it from promontory to promontory, thereby saving the time that would be required to follow the devious coastline. In this instance Charlie and I had been travelling along on the shore lead. Coming to what appeared to be a deep bay, and finding it was not yet time for camping, we had at once headed for the point on the opposite shore. Several hours later the Commander, coming down to the coast and reaching a place near where we had gone offshore, saw from his elevated position that this was really not a very deep bay, and that the ice next to the land was smoother than that offshore. He therefore had not bothered to go beyond the shore lead to look for our tracks because he thought we should have had no business out there. So he had turned the other way. It was only after walking back several miles that he had found our tracks near a point and had followed them on to camp. It was hard luck, but then when one is standing at sea-level (as we were) one cannot get a very good idea of travelling conditions a mile or so farther on, so it was really not our fault, since we had taken what appeared to us to be the best course.

It was now but a matter of thirty-five miles before we should know definitely whether or not we were to find our people. It was beginning to look doubtful, for so far we had not seen man-tracks. Should we find no people our plans for the coming year's ice trip would be seriously endangered. A northerly base of operations was essential if the trip were to be a success. Judging by the amount

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of game we had seen so far, we could not hope to live on caribou. Furthermore, caribou, while delicious to the taste, do not provide enough fat with which to heat a winter camp. It would be necessary to have fuel for heating our house during the winter, and this fuel could only be secured by going out to the floe, some seven miles offshore from Cape Murray on Brock Island, and sealing in the open water of the shore lead.

It seemed to me that even if we should find no people at Cape Murray we should not necessarily have to abandon our plans for an advance base, and so I proposed that we ourselves should go out to the floe and establish a sealing-camp where we could put up enough seals to enable us to carry out our programme. After we had secured enough meat my two companions could proceed southward to Melville Island, join Storkerson's and Natkusiak's parties, and send a sledge back to me. The plan was an appealing one, but the Commander, after considering everything, decided that while we could easily do this, it would be a trifle too risky, because, as he pointed out, we did not know how things were at Melville Island—whether our ship, the *Polar Bear*, had arrived, whether Storkerson had had much success with the summer hunt, or even if there were any people at all on Melville Island. It was about five months since Storkerson had left us.

Our misgivings about not finding people at Murray were not without cause, for when we finally got there we found no one, neither had anyone visited the place since we left it in the previous spring. It was discouraging. We had already travelled 1500 miles or more on this trip, and instead of finding a warm and comfortable camp at the end of our journey we found nothing, and our people were God only knew where.

It was getting pretty cold. We could have no fire inside the tent, because we had barely enough fuel with which to cook our meals. The snow was still too soft for the building of snow-houses, which would have been far superior to our now flimsy and worn-out tent. Our clothing, too,

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decided to make a quick trip now and haul the dry meat to camp when he returned. It seems that now that there was snow on the ground and travelling conditions were good they wished to pay a visit to the ship and get a few delicacies in the way of food and tobacco, after having lived on a straight diet of meat all summer, with never a smoke or chew. The Commander deplored the fact that he had men on his expedition who were so foolish as to wish to waste a week's time in order to satisfy a desire for something other than meat to live on. This was especially vexing because in so doing they had left their hard-earned supply of dry meat unprotected. But it was necessary that some one should go to Winter Harbour in order to get material for repairing our broken sledges, without the use of which we could not make another ice trip. As one sledge was all that would be necessary for this, the Commander told Lopez to remain behind and to return with us to Storkerson's camp. This would give us an extra dog-team with which to haul home the dry meat. The next day Storkerson, Castel, and Split went on to Winter Harbour, while we started for Storkerson's. As the camp was only thirty-five miles away we arrived there in the evening of the same day.

Storkerson's camp was a much more pretentious place than Natkusiak's. It also was roofed with ovibos-hides, but was much larger and was dug down about three feet below the level of the ground; and the walls were lined with huge, flat rocks. It was twenty-eight feet long by twelve feet wide, and six and a half feet high—an Arctic palace. The floor was of large, flat stones nicely joined together. A bed-platform, three feet high and twelve feet long, extended across the rear of the room, and an alcove, six feet long, with a raised bed-platform, was situated at the other end. The home-made stove of empty lard-tins was midway between the two beds and against the stone wall. There was ample room for all in this comfortable camp. Mrs Storkerson and Mrs Lopez gave us a hearty welcome. They had, with true Eskimo hospitality, put a

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huge kettle on the fire as soon as we had arrived, and before long they dished out upon an enormous platter choice cuts of delicious ovibos-meat.

Our trip was over at last, and I think all three of us were glad of it. The Commander said that it had been the hardest he had made during his entire ten years of Arctic experience, but we had the satisfaction of knowing that we had made one of the longest sledge trips ever made in the history of Arctic exploration. We had done so not without a certain amount of discomfort, but without any of us seriously freezing or any of the dogs dying from starvation.

Having nothing to do this feast-day, we spent it in writing up our diaries and figuring out how many days we had been on this trip; and, as we wanted to make our trip show up as well as possible, we reckoned from February 14, for on that day Charlie and I had left the *Polar Bear* camp with the first load to be relayed north. Since then we had travelled nearly every day except during the three weeks we spent on Loughheed Island, but even there we had travelled more or less, hunting and exploring the island. It was now October 17, the interval between was 246 days. The Commander had started from the *North Star* base on March 2, and his time was 229 days. Then we commenced to figure out how many days we had spent on the trail since we had joined the expedition.

For the past year Charlie and I held the record, mine exceeding Charlie's by a few days, for I had started my sledge work on October 10, 1915, a little over a year before. In addition to the trip we had just finished together, I had also made the Banks Island trip the previous autumn. Altogether I had travelled by sledge and dog-team over 2200 miles, and having just passed my twenty-first birthday I considered myself a regular 'Arctic hero.' The Commander thought that we could take one day's rest before beginning the work of hauling home the meat—although the unguarded caches were in danger from polar bears.

Next day Lopez and I hitched our dog-teams and started for the first cache, which was about six miles south-west of

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camp. Our sledges were empty and the dogs therefore made good time. When we neared the cache we saw an ominous sign—the tracks of a polar bear. We were no less eager to arrive at the cache than were our dogs, which, as soon as they saw the bear's trail, bounded forward with almost unbelievable speed. Our sledges bounced from snow-drift to snowdrift, striking pieces of rubbly ice, leaping high into the air and coming down again with a terrific impact. The bear's trail was taking us straight toward the meat-cache. He had apparently scented it and had made a bee-line for it.

Following the fresh trail was risky, because at any moment our sledges might be dashed to pieces against the pressure-ridges and ice-boulders which lay in our path. But we could not stop our frenzied dogs. Lopez shouted to me, as we swerved round a point, that the cache was just round the next point, half a mile farther on. As he did so my leader dog paused momentarily, threw his head back and sniffed the air. The other dogs half stopped, heads up, noses quivering, eyes dilating—but only for an instant. Great as had been their speed before, it was now redoubled. A wilder ride, at least on dog-sledge, man never had. As I was being whizzed along I began to think about what would happen if my dogs should get entangled with a polar bear before I had a chance to shoot. It was now certain that there were animals of some kind at the meat-cache, which we were rapidly approaching. Our dogs were all well fed and would never have become so excited over the mere scenting of meat—they scented living animals and were wild with excitement. I loosened my gun, which was lashed to the slats of the sledge-bottom, so that I could pull it from its case at a second's notice.

A pressure-ridge about six feet high, extending from the sea to the point we had almost reached, prevented us from seeing the cache. The dogs scrambled up and disappeared on the other side. The next instant the sledge had struck the ridge, and in a jiffy I was hoisted up to the top. There, about two hundred yards away, was the cache half covered

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with snow. The surrounding snow was all dug up, and even at that distance I could see that bears had been despoiling the cache—but if so where had they disappeared to? My dogs were even more excited now than they had been before. All this takes longer to tell than it does to perceive, for the eye takes in everything at a glance. As I was being carried down the other side of the pressure-ridge I saw something yellow, about the size of a bear's head, projecting from behind the cache. I pulled back on the sledge, dragging my feet. At the same instant a polar bear sprang up from behind the cache and stood on top, glowering down at me as I was being dragged toward him by my infuriated dogs. I tried to upset the sledge, but was being dragged along so fast that I could not regain my feet and therefore could exert no leverage. The bear now gave vent to an angry growl and faced the dogs. I momentarily expected to see him plunge down upon them. My leader dog was about twenty-five yards from him when the bear leaped. He landed to one side of the sledge—and commenced to run, luckily for me. My dogs swerved and made a dash for him, but he ran with incredible speed into the rubble ice. This was fortunate, for the dogs' harness got caught in upstanding ice-stubbles and the sledge came to a stop. I upset it immediately and wedged it in between two ice-cakes. Then, grabbing my gun, I followed the bear into the rough ice where he had disappeared a moment before. Lopez, who was following close behind me, having had a similar experience with his dogs, likewise grabbed his gun and went in search of the bear.

As I entered a breach in a pressure-ridge, I saw the bear not more than seventy-five yards away. He was standing sidewise to me, listening to the loud barks of the two thwarted dog-teams. Resting my rifle on an ice-cake that had been tilted on edge by pressure, I fired. The bear ran directly ahead. He had gone about twenty feet when another shot rang out. That settled it. The bear dropped and Lopez and I ran over to him. We found, upon skinning and cutting him up, that both bullets had pierced his

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heart, and that the holes in the skin were less than two inches apart. I mention this because it seemed strange to me at the time that any animal should be able to run after having been shot through the heart. Since that day, however, I have been present at the killing of probably five or six hundred other large animals—either bear, caribou, or ovibos—and I believe that fully half of those shot through the heart ran a short distance before succumbing. Caribou in particular often run fifty yards or more when shot through or near the heart.

When Lopez and I examined the meat-cache we found things topsy-turvy. The ovibos-meat was scattered all over the ground beside the cache, but most of the dry seal-meat had been eaten. Lopez said that the meat of seventeen out of twenty-seven seals was gone.

The next morning we hauled home the remainder of the meat. Altogether, we estimated that the total meat salvaged weighed about one and a quarter tons, but we found later that we had overestimated the weight of all our dry meat because of its great bulk. It was lucky that on our second trip we reached the cache when we did, for a band of six wolves had just arrived there; they ran away before we could get a shot at them.

The women at the camp were sorry to hear about our not getting any of the wolves, because they needed material for trimming their coats. The trimming ordinarily used, and much preferred, is wolverine-skin. The reason for wolverine being preferred to any other fur is that, in addition to its beautifully glossy appearance and variegated colour, the hair is coarse, thereby lessening the difficulty with which hoar-frost and ice can be beaten or thawed out of it.

In this connexion it should be noted that the hood of one's coat should be cut well back, so that its edge comes just in front of the ears, leaving the entire face exposed. The trimming should be sewed round the edge of the hood, but should not project far forward—otherwise one's breath condenses on it, forming hoar-frost. Unless brushed off, this quickly melts from the heat of the body, and the water

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thus formed becomes ice and eventually freezes to the face. A hood which fits snugly (but not too snugly) round the face, and is cut well back so that the hoar-frost can be easily brushed off (there then being no angle between the face and the hood for the frost to lodge in), is by far the most efficient head-covering yet devised for Arctic travel.

As I said before, while wolverine is much preferred, wolf is the favourite substitute.

The next cache was at Cape Ross, sixteen miles away. It took Lopez and me two days to make the round trip. We were able to haul all the dry meat, 1200 pounds, in one trip. We camped overnight at Ross, using a tent and a little improvised stove, in which we burned coal carried with us. Although we had plenty of time to look round, we saw nothing to indicate that anyone from the *Polar Bear* had been there. (We thought that if the *Bear* were wintering in Melville Island Gonzales would certainly send men to Cape Ross with a message, for Ross is a very prominent headland and a recognized rendezvous.)

The day after we returned from Ross Lopez and I hauled home the meat of the bear we had killed at the six-mile cache, and also the many ovibos-hides which had been used to cover the cache.

We had now hauled in all the dry meat. Lopez and I did this work alone, not because Charlie was unwilling to help, but because the good old scout was feeling so badly. There are few things more painful than a felon, and Charlie's was an exceptionally large one. In coming down from Grassy it had caused him so much pain that there were times when he could not ride, having to walk behind the sledge holding his sick hand with his well one. Thanks to the Commander's tender care, it was now getting better.

October 23 was another day of *rest*—the second since the day we spent at Grassy, when we found Natkusiak's party and the coal-mine.

The next day, October 24, Lopez and I hunted to the south and east, but without success. The days were rapidly getting shorter and shorter, making a long hunt

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out of the question, and the noise from the many dogs in camp had probably frightened away the few ovibos that might have been near camp. But Charlie having reported a large herd to the north of camp, the Commander asked us to wait until Storkerson returned so that he might go with us to superintend the killing. We had not long to wait, for the very next day Storkerson, Castel, and Split arrived. A bulging sledge-load of mysterious-looking articles—tins and boxes and sacks of all descriptions—at once proclaimed that the travellers had come from 'civilization.' Food, food, food—sugar, potatoes, milk, coffee, jam, pilot bread, rice, oatmeal, and everything.

Charlie and I shouted questions at Storkie.

"How's your old college chum, Gonzales?" Charlie wanted to know.

"How does the old boat look?" I asked.

"There ain't no boat," said Split, "and there ain't no peoples."

"Gonzales hasn't come," Storkie told the Commander gravely.

No Gonzales, no *Polar Bear*, and yet all this food! Surely they were joking? But no. They had a story to tell such as Hans Christian Andersen or the Brothers Grimm might have written, in which a house of food, by magic means, appeared in the very moment of desolation.

After crossing the twenty-two-mile portage from Liddon Gulf Storkie and his party had arrived in the vicinity of Winter Harbour just at twilight. Looking from the summit of a high hill, upon which a huge wooden cross had been planted by the early explorers of this island, they were able to distinguish the ice-covered surface of the harbour, fringed by the dark brown of a windswept beach. They saw the outline of something which at first glance in the dusk they thought was the ship they expected to see. Then immediately they realized that it was not. It looked like a house, but if Gonzales had built a house, where was the *Polar Bear* and why was she not in the harbour? They descended the hill and ran toward this object, now boldly

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contrasted against the white of the harbour ice. As they ran they looked about for human footprints on the snow-covered ground, but saw none. A house, and yet no human tracks; it was eerie. It could not be a house; it must be a huge rock. But, when they neared it, the image grew sharper, and soon a house actually stood before them.

Then, despite the absence of tracks, it must be a house the *Polar Bear* people had built; even now some of the crew might be inside. But when they reached it they found it deserted. No sign of life was visible. The door was locked and the windows were boarded up. Nailed to the door was a box containing the following notice:

C.G.S. *Arctic*,
1st September, 1910

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

We finish this day our little house covering this cache, and expect to sail to-morrow morning for our destination.

The wind is strong from the north and the ice is going fast to the south. The harbour is clear of ice, and part of the strait.

All hands are well.

Whoever touches this cache has to inform the Hon. Minister of Marine and Fisheries, Ottawa, Canada, as soon as he can.

This cache is intended only for shipwrecked crews in case of bare necessity.

Given under my hand this day, the first day of September, Nineteen Hundred and Ten.

(Signed) J. E. BERNIER,
Commander

Storkerson forced the lock and opened the door. In the centre of a large rough-boarded, ceilingless room stood a pile of boxes, casks, sacks, and tins of food—in all, four and a half tons. There were rope and canvas and kerosene and lanterns, shotgun and rifle and ammunition; even nails, tar-paper, and a red painted cart! But the food was what took everybody's eye—butter, bread, jam, milk, sugar, coffee, oatmeal, rice, potatoes, honey, etc., all apparently in good condition. The three 'shipwrecked sailors' proceeded to
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have a feast of white man's food, their first taste for many a day.

After remaining here a day they loaded their sledge with about eight hundred pounds of things from the cache and started back. Arriving at Liddon Gulf portage, they cached a hundred and thirty pounds of food and part of their load and brought the rest to camp.

Storkerson said that while in the vicinity of Winter Harbour they had seen a herd of ovibos, but that Castel and Split were reluctant to stop long enough to kill them—they had a heavy load of provisions and did not care to skin the oxen and haul them into the house where they would have been safe from wolves. I mention this now because later it will be seen how much misery and suffering would have been averted had they killed this herd of ovibos and cached the meat, as they at first thought of doing.

Storkerson had found no sign of anyone's having visited Winter Harbour since Bernier, our fairy godfather. We wondered again and again where our ship, the *Polar Bear*, could be. It was now the end of October, and if she had reached any other harbour on Melville Island at all her people had had ample time in which to connect with us. But speculation was futile; and there was work to be done, and lots of it. The day after Storkerson arrived we took a team and sledge with a light camping-outfit and started out to hunt ovibos.

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Mannlichers, which added to the din. The oxen ran blindly in circles. Finally, an old white-horned bull started off up the steep, rocky hillside followed by about half the herd. The rest were dead. At the summit he wheeled, came forward, and stood posed in an attitude of defiance on the brink. Storkerson fired; and a shudder passed through the aged ox. Just for a moment more he stood; then he plunged forward and rolled over and over, not stopping till he reached the hunter's feet. We scrambled to the top of the hill, and saw the others disappearing over the next ridge. We pursued and came upon them running about excitedly on top of a little stony plateau.

One after another, it seemed to me, the three remaining bulls took command of the herd of cows and yearlings and tried to lead out to safety, and swiftly one after another Storkerson picked them off. The herd was then helpless and we killed them all. Fifteen dark heaps, some scattered, some close together, lay on the snow; on the other ridge there were twenty-three. A brutal sight, if you will. But the question of the right of those ovibos to live when their meat was needed for a scientific expedition must be settled by a wiser head than mine. What we, the aliens, had done to them other forces in the North as alien to man might do to us before the summer came—they certainly would if we did not have food.

The hunt was over, and the work began. It is no easy matter to skin thirty-eight ovibos. Unlike that of caribou, the skin adheres so closely to the meat that one must literally cut every inch of it from the carcass. We could not work in our mittens because they quickly became covered with blood and froze as stiff as boards. We had to use our bare hands; and as the temperature was about 20° below zero we had to stop repeatedly and take the numbness out of them and prevent freezing by thrusting them into deep cuts which we made in the warm flesh of the oxen. Our knives also became crusted with frozen blood, which we had to melt in the same way. To add to our discomfort and retard the speed of the work, squalls of snow darkened the air and

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drove into our eyes and faces. Our backs were weary and our fingers icy when at last we stopped work in the snowy dusk. We had skinned twenty-three animals.

We stumbled back toward the glimmering light of the lantern which Charlie had hung on the tent-pole to guide us. Within, the savoury odour of hot coffee struck our nostrils, and Charlie was ready to dish up our dinner as soon as we had removed our outer coats and boots. It did seem good to have coffee once more; and I think none of us regretted that Storkerson had found the Bernier cache. We had been hard at it since our breakfast at dawn, without even stopping a minute for a bite to eat, and our appetites left nothing to be desired—or devoured.

The next day was even harder and colder work because the fifteen remaining carcasses were stiff and cold. Their legs were frozen so hard that we could not remove the skin, but had to cut it off from above the knees. The flesh of the carcasses was not frozen, but they were unpleasantly cold to handle. We worked until long after dark, hacking away at the rapidly freezing skins, for had we left them another night they would have been impossible to remove. As it was, we had to leave an old bull unskinned. This spoilt the carcass for human food, for the hide kept in enough of the body heat for the flesh to become strongly tainted. The meat was not wasted, however, because when it became necessary to feed it to the dogs we could always chop the skin from the carcass with axes.

All that now remained to be done was to pile the frozen carcasses together and cover them with the skins to prevent them from becoming matted with snow. After loading our sledge with the fat taken from the oxen we returned to the base-camp, arriving there after dark.

During our absence the Commander had formulated plans for our winter's activities, and these he set in motion immediately.

We had returned at 6.30 P.M., October 29. At daybreak, October 30, we began to sort out the dry meat intended for transportation north. We loaded two sledges, one with

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five hundred pounds of dry meat and a two-hundred-pound bag of seal-oil, the other with seven hundred pounds of dry meat, to take to Natkusiak's camp. For dog-food *en route* we were to add green meat from the ovibos we had just killed. If we saw any more ovibos we were to kill them and cache the meat. An important detail of our work would be the building of a chain of snow-houses along the trail between the Commander's and Natkusiak's camps, to facilitate travel for those using the route later in the year.

On the morning of October 31 Storkerson, Castel, Split, and I started north along the east coast of Liddon Gulf.

The first night out from the home base we camped near the ovibos kill and took on enough fresh meat to last us until we should reach the Hecla and Griper portage leading to the ice on the north coast of Melville Island. Charlie and Lopez would haul the rest to the Commander's camp. The next two days' travel were short. Soft, deep snow and heavy loads made our progress slow.

It was not until November 3 that we reached the Winter Harbour portage. After picking up the hundred and thirty pounds or so of the Bernier supplies cached there by Storkerson, we proceeded north to the Hecla and Griper portage, where we delayed several days to hunt for fresh meat so as not to use up the dry meat intended for the ice trip. We saw and approached two herds of ovibos, but the light was so poor that we killed only four animals, the others fleeing into the dark. The sun had been below the horizon some time now, and the light was so poor that at midday we could hardly see the sights on our rifles. We were trailing now by lantern light. Blizzards and darkness delayed us so much that although we travelled whenever it was possible it was not until November 17 that we reached Natkusiak's camp at Grassy. He was delighted to see us, especially as we had brought him some of the tobacco found at the Bernier cache. But when we asked for fresh meat to feed our dogs he pulled a long face. There wasn't any green meat in camp, he said. And, furthermore, all the

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meat he had, ten ovibos, was cached on the land some ten miles to the south.

There were twenty-five hungry dogs to be fed ; therefore we should get this meat immediately to prevent using up our dry meat. But the blizzard blew up, making it impossible for us to stir out of doors. The gale continued, and in the now total darkness things took on a most sinister aspect. After eight days of repeated attempts to get the meat we finally succeeded, but only at the expense of nearly all of us freezing our faces. One of our dogs, Sapsuk, froze his flanks so badly that his usefulness was, for the time being, at an end.

It was quite apparent that a camp could only be maintained at Grassy by taking away as many dogs and people as possible, so that those remaining would have sufficient food. Storkerson accordingly left Castel there in charge of the camp, with only the Eskimo, Alingnak and his wife, Guninana, and a dog and some puppies for company. Natkusiak, Ikiuna, and Pannigabluk and her little son, with all their dogs, were to go south with us, where food was more abundant. Castel, during our absence, was to cut up all the dry meat that we had brought, weigh it carefully, and tie it into little bundles of half a pound each. These were to be used as dog-rations for the early stages of our spring ice trip.

We spent Thanksgiving Day, November 24, hauling coal from the mine to the camp at Grassy, so that Castel would not run out of fuel before our return. We also gave him the fifty pounds left of the Bernier groceries. These, with the meat which we had hauled into camp, would supply himself, Alingnak, and Guninana during our absence.

On November 27 we left Grassy, heading for the Hecla and Griper portage, about fifty miles distant. We were storm-bound for two days at our first camp out. On December 2 we reached the bottom of Hecla Bay, after groping our way along the coast by lantern light for seventeen miles without stopping. Next day we started across the portage toward Liddon Gulf. Hitherto, despite the darkness, it

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had been fairly easy to keep our course, because we had been travelling along the shore with the high land on one hand and the sea-ice on the other and the coastline itself for guide. Now we were going overland, endeavouring to guide ourselves by our old trail. Snow began to fall thickly. We trudged on in almost total darkness, the trail swiftly growing fainter under the falling flakes.

Storkie, carrying the lantern, led the way. My sledge was last in the procession, and it was so dark that I could barely see my leader dog. Storkie presently stopped and we pulled up beside him. He announced that the trail was lost. We had only one lantern, and, taking it, Natkusiak struck out in search of the trail. He walked in a great circle to the east and then south and west and back to where we were shouting our position to him. But all in vain, the trail was now wiped out. Storkie said there was nothing to do but to get along as best we could. So he led off, taking his direction by a small compass, for the ice of Liddon Gulf, some twenty miles to the south-west.

After travelling over an exceedingly stony country for about twelve miles we reached what appeared to be a large river running approximately south-west. We crawled along the top of its precipitous banks for four miles, then descended a gully to its bed, where we travelled for another six miles. At that point we built a snow-house and camped, for dogs and men were both played out after the eleven and a half hours of hard going. Little Ikiuna unharnessed the dogs and hitched them to the dog-line. Pannigabluk stood out on the snow, holding the lantern high to light us at our work of cutting snow-blocks and building. Her five-year-old son, little Alashuk, wrapped in caribou-skins, slept contentedly on the sledge, as a princeling whose palace and banquet are prepared for him, appropriately, by the labour of serfs.

After feeding the dogs we went indoors and cooked supper. We beat the snow and hoar-frost out of our clothing and put our outer clothing where they would not thaw and get damp. One characteristic of winter travel is

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that no matter what the discomfitures of the day may have been they are offset by the quiet and rest of the evening, if one has mastered the technique of snow-house building and of keeping his clothing dry.

We broke camp at 2 A.M. on December 5, and followed the river for about an hour. Then the moon came out clear and bright and showed us that the river was not running south-west toward the gulf, but north-east and narrowing as we neared the source. So we climbed out of the ravine and headed in a south-south-easterly direction. Clouds now obscured the moon, and the darkness grew intense.

As we floundered on the land became steadily rockier and rockier. We kept stumbling upon huge jumbled-up rock-piles, and had to lift the sledges bodily in order to cross them. At times the air was tainted with the odour of brimstone as our sledge-runners scraped over the boulders. I could not see my companions, but I saw by the line of sparks as the steel runners struck the rocks where each sledge was. We found ourselves gradually climbing higher and higher into mountainous country, and we knew not which way to turn. Our sledge shoeing was already beginning to wear out, but to retrace our way over the terrible rocks would have meant the ruin of all our sledges.

There was, so far as we knew, no very high land to the east of the portage, therefore we must be on the west side. Now the west coast is indented by many deep fiords, and we must strike one of them soon if we travelled due south. This seemed the best thing to do under the circumstances.

A blizzard came up. In addition to our being lost there was now the worry about food. We had expected to reach the meat-cache on the south side of the portage the day before, and had carried only enough food to last until then. We now had left only enough dog-feed for one more day's travel.

However, we were expecting to strike an arm of the sea soon, and it was with hopeful hearts that we lifted our sledges over the bad places, each time thinking it was the

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last difficult place we should have to negotiate before reaching the sea-ice.

When we did finally strike a gentle snow-covered slope running to the eastward the dogs pulled with renewed vigour, and quickly caught up with Storkie, who was trotting along ahead, holding his lantern high so as to be able to see a few feet in front of him. Suddenly Storkie gave an agonized yell: "For God's sake, stop the sledge!" His lantern described a large circle and he sprang backward. It was almost too late. The leader dog did not stop, and running past Storkie plunged into obscurity. Natkusiak upset his sledge and hung back with all his might, while Storkie ran back and waved his lantern to warn us not to come any closer with our sledges. We, in turn, upset our sledges, and after making sure that the dogs wouldn't pull them ahead, went to help Natkusiak and Storkie, for their sledge was on the very edge of an overhanging snowbank which ended in a sheer drop of several hundred feet.

Pannigabluk's little boy, all bundled up in furs, who had been riding on Storkie's sledge, was catapulted out and lay on his back, a round bag of fur, kicking and screaming, on the very edge of the precipice, until his frantic mother rushed and snatched him back.

By the light of the moon, which was now shining in a patch of clear sky, we saw far below us the glint of ice, bounded on either side by great jagged boulders, rising to precipitous cliffs whose tops were overhung by huge snowbanks similar to the one we were on. At any moment ours might break off and send us all into the bottom. No time was to be lost. With the two women helping bravely, we all exerted our utmost strength in pulling the sledge and the frightened dog-team (the leader of which was already over the brink, hanging by his harness) back to safety.

It was the narrowest escape any of us had ever had. But we were, in a way, glad that it had happened, for now that we knew where the ice was all that remained was to find a safe slope upon which the descent could be made.

We turned south-eastward, following the edge of the

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cliff, but soon all progress was cut off by a great chaotic pile of boulders. Our sledges were by now so weakened that should we try to pull them across this dangerous ground they would never be able to stand the strain. We veered due east, flanking the boulders, and looking for a descending place in that direction. The moon again clouded over, and, not daring to travel in the blackness, we built a snow-shelter and crouched down behind it, waiting for clear skies. The moon came out at 8.45 A.M. and we went on.

But then clouds intervened, and by the feeble light we could barely see to avoid the precipices, as we worked our way slowly eastward, stumbling, falling, slipping, tearing our clothes and wearing out our boot-soles. At last we came to a place where the line of cliffs was broken by a great rounded, snow-covered hill, sloping steeply down to the inlet ice. Storkie told us to wait while he went down to reconnoitre. We wondered pessimistically if this hill also would end in an overhanging snowbank. But soon we heard Storkie's cheerful shout: "Unhitch the dogs and wrap the chains round the runners; everything is all right."

We took the sledges down first, two of us at the stern of each, dragging our feet so as to decrease the speed. It was but a few minutes before all were safe on the smooth ice of the inlet.

We had been on trail fifteen hours, but the sense of exhaustion that overcame us was due, not to our travel, but to the sudden relaxation of taut and strained nerves. We built another house and rested before making the dash for food, for we ate that night the last of our dried meat, and fed our dogs with pieces of our bed-skins.

Sixteen hours later found us all sitting in a warm tent at the north end of the Winter Harbour portage, feasting on boiled seal-skin.

The day had been clear as crystal, and the stars and waning moon gave sufficient light, so that after travelling to the entrance of the inlet we saw and recognized the

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Barry Bay headland. We had struck the bay—judging by the distance we travelled to get out of it—at the extreme end. All was now clear-sailing, and we set a straight course across Liddon Gulf, found our previous sledge-tracks which ran along that side, and followed them to the Winter Harbour portage, where Charlie and Lopez had recently been and had left a tent standing.

There was no food there except some seal-skins with part of the blubber attached. Most of this we fed to our famished dogs, and the balance we cooked and ate.

At the tent we found a note saying that Charlie and Lopez had been there to meet us, but that after waiting a week and finding themselves running short of dog-feed they had returned to the Commander at Peddie Point.

We slept that night wedged in side by side like so many sardines in a tin—seven of us in a little eight by ten tent. The next day, after Storkie had written out a report for Natkusiak to take to the Commander, our party separated. Natkusiak, taking Ikiuna, Pannigabluk, and little Alashuk with him, headed south along the east coast of the gulf, bound for the Commander's camp, about forty miles distant.

Storkie, Split, and I, with two broken sledges and worn-out teams of dogs, headed south-east across the Winter Harbour portage, bound for the Bernier cache, where we intended to repair our sledges.

We had certainly had our share of adventure, and were hoping for an easy trip across the twenty-mile portage to the harbour, but there was no luck. The first day out we got lost in the dark again, and, after zigzagging about all night long, finally struck the ice on the other side. But our dogs were spent, and we had to build a snow-house and camp. Split and I thought we should have to go without any supper, but Storkie saved the day by producing from the sledge-bag a large coil of ovibos thong which he had intended to use for sledge-lashings.

This seems to be a good place for a short digression on the way we make raw-hide lines. After an ovibos has been killed the skin is put to soak in a shallow pool of water

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came out to help unhitch the teams. Then we went inside—and, after giving the dogs a double ration of pemmican, we sat down to the feast Storkie had prepared. And how we did eat !

The next day we did nothing but lie about and talk and feast. It seemed good to be able to get brief respite from the steady nerve-racking grind of such precarious travel.

CHAPTER XXI

THE Bernier house was far too large to heat with our scanty fuel. Fortunately there were several rolls of tar-paper among our fairy godfather's supplies, and with these we partitioned off from the main house a room twelve feet by twelve. This was large enough to accommodate our party, and small enough to be easily kept warm. The main part of the house we used as a workroom for repairing the sledges, most of which needed to be almost entirely rebuilt. On December 12 Charlie and Lopez arrived ; and five days later Natkusiak and Ikiuna came in, bringing a letter of instructions from the Commander. These instructions were, briefly, as follows :

Charlie, Split, and I were to freight two sledge-loads of the Winter Harbour provisions north to Grassy. Storkerson, Lopez, Natkusiak, and Ikiuna were to return to Peddie Point, where they would load up with our remaining dry meat and fat, and then they also were to proceed to Grassy.

The first thing to be done was to replace the oak stanchions of our sledges, which we had broken in our trip across the mountains. Storkie and Natkusiak undertook this task and worked energetically until the job was completed. Charlie and Lopez were detailed to remove the steel shoeing from a large double-keeled whaleboat left by Bernier. This was a difficult thing to do, because they had to work outside in the cold, filing away the many rusty bolts with which the shoeing was clamped to the keels. Split was detailed to break up barrels, etc., for firewood. Ikiuna cooked for us ; and I had the job of cooking for our pack of thirty-five hungry dogs. It kept me busy all day.

We had a large amount of pemmican for dog-feed, but this was intended for use on the trail. So I gave them salt

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pork and pilot bread in its place. The pork was so extremely salt that I had to take out all the fat, which, while hot, I mixed with broken-up pilot bread and fed to the dogs in the form of a paste; they seemed to like it immensely. Altogether our dogs consumed 1025 pounds of these provisions while at the house.

During our stay at Winter Harbour we were living almost exclusively on the Bernier groceries because we had no fresh meat. Although we all liked these white man's provisions, nevertheless we all began to get hungry for fresh food. But in the previous autumn no game had been killed in this vicinity. And now hunting was impossible, for there was practically no difference between day and night.

On December 27 Charlie, Split, and I started out. We took sixteen dogs and the two sledges, each loaded with eight hundred pounds of provisions. A hundred pounds to the dog is not too much when the temperature is no lower than 20° below zero; but now the mercury dropped to 50° below, and the steel shoeing of our sledges grated on the snow as if it were being dragged through sand. In addition to the cold and darkness we had a head-wind to fight. Our progress was no more than a slow crawl. We finally had to unload part of our freight and advance by relays. We were stormbound two days, and in the centre of the portage. It was not until January 3 that we had moved everything down to the ice of Liddon Gulf. We remained here three days, resting our dogs.

When we were about to start north on the morning of the 6th we saw a light coming down from inland; it was Storkie's lantern. He was on his way south with Lopez and Natkusiak to the Commander's camp. He gave us additional instructions to the effect that when we reached the meat-cache at the Hecla and Griper portage we were to take from it sufficient meat to last for dog-feed on the trip north to Grassy. But if we found that this cache had been rifled by wolves or bears we were to cache our loads there and rejoin him at the Commander's.

This was what we had to do, for the cache, which had

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contained the meat of four ovibos, was completely despoiled; the wolves had not left enough flesh on the bones to make one meal for our dogs, and we had to use our treasured pemmican instead. The next day we started south, arriving at Stefansson's camp at 11.30 P.M., January 11. We had travelled against bitter head-winds; and on the last day without food for our dogs.

We stayed there six days, preparing sledge-loads and equipment, and on the morning of January 17 we again headed north. This time there were seven of us—Storkerson, Charlie, Lopez, Split, Natkusiak, Ikiuna, and myself—with forty-three dogs and four sledges.

When we left Stefansson's camp our loads were light (about a thousand pounds in all of dry meat and a little fresh meat) and we made good speed until we reached the cache of provisions at the portage. But there our troubles recommenced. Extremely cold weather, severe blizzards, frost-bitten faces, made this trip exceptionally difficult. Even our dogs froze their flanks; and, although they worked as hard as they could, we had to harness ourselves to the sledges and tug along hour after hour.

When we camped at night we were too tired to bother much about cooking, so we used to boil huge kettles of tea into which we put chunks of ovibos-fat and broken-up pieces of pilot bread.

We arrived at Grassy on February 3. It had taken us seventeen days to advance our loads the 120 miles between the two camps.

Castel and his two companions at Grassy were well, but beginning to get rather lonesome, for they had finished their work of portioning out the dry meat and putting it up in neat little bundles of half a pound each for dog-rations.

Storkie, Lopez, and Split left us on the 6th. They were returning to the Commander's camp whence, accompanied by Stefansson himself, they would once more start north; for it would then be time to commence the ice trip for which we had been making all these preparations.

During Storkie's absence we, at Grassy, were to hunt

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and haul into camp meat for dog- and man-food. Although the light was still rather poor for hunting, because the sun had not yet risen above the horizon, it was sufficient for short hunts. The days were now rapidly lengthening, for when the sun once starts to return it comes with giant strides in these high latitudes.

After securing enough dog-feed we were to freight our loads north to Borden Island and then return to Grassy. By that time the Commander's party would have arrived.

A succession of blizzards prevented us from doing much hunting until the 12th of February. But on that day the weather cleared, and, although it was cold—45° below—nevertheless we set out, Charlie and Natkusiak going north-west, and Castel and I south-east.

We took our dog-teams ; and both parties were prepared to spend several nights away from the house. Castel and I had no luck. Although we covered, in the course of our hunt, more than fifty miles we saw not a single fresh ovibos-track. Apparently the ovibos had deserted that part of the country. We learned later that Natkusiak's party had hunted extensively in that vicinity during the previous summer and autumn. Unlike caribou, ovibos are not very mobile animals, and none had moved into this depopulated district since that time.

But Natkusiak and Charlie, hunting to the north-west in a district which had not been visited during the autumn, had found ovibos plentiful and had killed twenty of them.

This was sufficient meat for the time being, so we set about the next part of our programme—*i.e.*, the landing of a cache on Borden Island, eighty miles to the north of Melville. Castel, Charlie, and I, with fifteen dogs and two sledges, each loaded with seven hundred pounds of provisions, left Grassy on March 2, arrived at Borden Island on March 9, cached our loads, and returned, arriving home on March 13.

The average temperature during this trip, which was just another uninteresting chapter of work, was about 50° below

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zero. Each day we harnessed ourselves to the slow-moving sledges. Even so it was with difficulty that we made fifteen miles per day. Each night we built a snow-house, the door of which we were careful to block up before leaving the next morning, for we should have occasion to use these houses on our return journey, and did not care to find them then filled with drifted snow. The return trip was made in half the time, because our sledges were light, we had a trail to follow, and we had houses to camp in.

We had expected to find Stefansson and Storkie at Grassy, but were not prepared for the surprise that awaited us. Visitors! Captain Gonzales, Knight, Pikalu, Illun, and Ulipsfink, one of the 'Blond' Eskimos! There were in addition Stefansson, Storkie, Lopez, Split, Natkusiak, Alingnak, Ikiuna, and Guninana, and the three of us, making a grand total of sixteen. It seemed funny to see so many people all at one time.

Gonzales had quite a story to tell. He had been unable to bring the *Polar Bear* to Melville Island the previous summer, because impenetrable ice-floes, stretching across Prince of Wales Strait from shore to shore, completely barred all northern advance. So he had turned south and put his ship in for the winter at Walker Bay, about ninety miles south of her previous winter quarters. He said the reason for doing this was that he considered the winter quarters at Walker Bay to be safer. This, however, was done in direct disobedience to the Commander's orders, which stated emphatically that, in the event of the *Polar Bear* not being able to advance northward, she was to winter at her old quarters and not under any circumstances to go farther south.

At first it rather irritated us to find that the entire ship's company, which should have been in Melville Island to help us all the winter, had not even made an effort to reach us by sledge before this. All the most difficult tasks had already been done, such as the preliminary work of hauling and retripping, and of putting caches north along the trail we should follow when we commenced the ice trip. As far

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as any practical help was concerned, the picturesque Gonzales might just as well have stayed at home.

But he had made a long, hard trip, he let us all know, to bring us Primus stoves, kerosene, tinned milk, tobacco, and a large dried-apple pie which Levi had made for us. Nothing less would have satisfied him, he assured the Commander, than to come himself and explain why our ship had not come to Melville Island. Charlie and I could not tell what the Commander thought of this: he gave no sign; but we, who knew Gonzales of old, thought he seemed a bit over-anxious to ingratiate himself, though at that time we had no inkling of the real state of affairs.

The captain also told another story which, in a way, excused him. It was to the effect that Captain Pete Bernard and Thomsen were both believed to have perished while on their way from Banks Island to visit us. We had been expecting Thomsen and his family, but we had not thought that Captain Bernard would accompany him.

Gonzales said he got the story from Captain Crawford of the schooner *Challenge*, which was now wintering only a few miles south of the *Polar Bear*. Crawford had met Captain Petersen of the whaling-ship *Herman* on the inward voyage, and Petersen told him that he had touched at Cape Kellett during his summer and had learned from Bernard that we were in need of new sledges. Bernard had purchased some oak and other sledge-building equipment from Petersen, and had told him that after he had built the sledges he and Thomsen would bring them to us in the autumn.

When Gonzales heard this he thought it would be best for Thomsen and Bernard to go north in company with a party from the *Polar Bear*; so in October he had sent the two Kilian brothers to them with a letter.

Gonzales said he had waited until the Kilians were two months overdue; then, as they had not yet returned, he had come north. Needless to say, this news caused us much concern. However, it was now too late to do anything, for if anything had happened to the missing men

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it had taken place two months previously. They were experienced men, and we could only hope that all was well. Our work was to get the ice trip under way.

The Commander decided to send Castel, Charlie, Knight, Pikalu, and me on ahead to build a line of snow-houses. In addition to the house-building we were to pick up the provisions we had cached on Borden Island and advance these north along its east coast and thence out on the ice, until we came to the floe, where we were to await the Commander. As we went along we were to complete and correct the survey we had made the previous autumn while on our way home from Lougheed Island.

We were to have started on March 16, but a severe blizzard caused us to delay an extra day, thus giving us three whole days of rest before our final start. Under ordinary circumstances we should not have travelled even that day, for the blizzard continued to rage and the temperature was 30° below zero. However, we could not afford to lose any more valuable time dilly-dallying around camp when everything depended upon our getting out on the moving ice at an early date ; so we manned our hauling-straps and shouted to the dogs.

Soon the camp with its cheery fireplace and gleaming ice windows, its ovibos-hide walls and ceiling, its warm, fur-covered bed-platform, upon which was grouped a crowd of roughly dressed, keen-eyed travellers—the Commander busy at his writing, Storkie and Gonzales peaceably swapping tales, Natkusiak mending snowshoes, Guninana and Ikiuna putting the finishing touches on the water-boots they were making, Lopez cooking biscuits—all these were lost in a cloud of whirling snow as we commenced our great adventure north !

Mush up, boys ! No more turning back ! The long and weary days of freighting, the hardships of the winter darkness and the windswept mountain-tops of Melville Island—all these were over and forgotten. The ice trip had begun !

Little Castel led the way, I followed with my team,

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Charlie and Knight came after me, and Pikalu brought up the rear. We had gone but a short distance when Charlie came running up to me shouting that Pikalu and his team were completely swallowed up by the blizzard. I yelled to Castel to stop, but he could not hear above the roar of the wind. I ran forward and overtook him, and we turned back together, but now my own dogs were nowhere to be seen. We worked our way back against the storm, and before long, during momentary lulls, could catch glimpses of the dogs lying down all curled up in the snow, their noses in their tails and totally oblivious to all that was passing. Approaching the sledge, we saw no sign of Charlie. He also had vanished. His dogs, like mine, had curled themselves up in the snow, where they lay like so many bags of fluffy fur. We passed the sledges, in the lee of which snowdrifts were already piling up, and commenced to follow the back trail searching for Pikalu. Soon we made out the indistinct form of a man advancing toward us; then the dogs appeared, and next the sledge with a man beside it. It seems that while I had gone to notify Castel, Charlie had started back to look for Pikalu, whom he had found some distance in the rear. Pikalu's sledge had upset and he had been unable to right it and was about to unload part of his freight when Charlie came to the rescue. After that experience we were careful to keep a close watch on one another.

That night we camped in the first of our snow-houses. When we hit the trail the next day hardly a breath of wind was stirring. The sun, which had been with us only a few days, was still low in the south, a huge blood-red apple swinging through a flaming sky.

The eighty-mile trip north to the cache on Borden Island was an easy one. We had our old houses to camp in every night, and our old trail to follow during the day. But after adding to our load the 1200 pounds we had cached there our progress was considerably slower.

[The last of our old snow-houses was now left behind and we commenced the real work we had been sent to

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chorus, while Pikalu added his bit by beating time with a large soup-spoon on a disreputable tin plate.

Castel mapped the east coast as we followed it north. After arriving at the north-east corner of Borden on April 5, we set out north across the landfast ice, and reached the floe the following day. We were, on the whole, fairly well pleased with our accomplishment, for besides building twenty large snow-houses along our trail we had hauled to the floe sledge-provisions aggregating 1200 pounds.

All five of us climbed to the top of a pressure-ridge and gazed seaward. Offshore there was nothing to be seen except ice. Were we looking at an unknown, unsounded ocean, one of those 'lifeless wastes' we had heard about, or was it well stocked with seals and polar bears, such as the ocean Stefansson had travelled over during his ice trips to the west of Banks and Prince Patrick Islands? How many miles of travel across its broken-up surface would bring us to another 'new land'?

Castel and I were full of enthusiasm, and it struck us as strange that Charlie did not join in our animated conversation. He was seated on top of an ice-boulder, his head sunk between his hands. Suddenly I noticed how gaunt and haggard he had become, how utterly worn-out he looked. Then it dawned upon me that Charlie had been acting queerly of late, and even before he spoke I knew that something terrible had happened to him.

"Noice, I've been trying to keep from telling you," he said, "but it's no use any longer. I am about ready to cave in." Charlie did not know what was wrong with him, and neither did we. He told us that he had been **weakening** gradually; that he felt shortness of breath, and pains in all his joints, and his gums were beginning to get sore. These are symptoms of scurvy, but at the time we did not realize it, for we had been travelling so steadily all winter long that the thought of any of us getting scurvy had not occurred to us.

Charlie had always been my best chum, but I had never fully understood his nobleness of character until now. Here

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he had been doing his full share of the work all along and without a single word of complaint. How difficult it must have been for him to assume the cheerfulness he had displayed during our long northward trip, when all the time this horrible disease had been eating his vitality away !

We descended from our pressure-ridge, and, after selecting a large, flat-topped snowdrift for our house-site, erected a house where we would await the Commander. On the following day at 12.35 P.M. he arrived, with Storkie, Split, Natkusiak, and Ikiuna. Unfortunately an offshore wind had sprung up during the night, setting the sea-ice in motion. Already a lead had opened along the floe and was now rapidly widening. We were stranded. However, it was no use crying over spilt milk, so we built a house adjoining ours for the Commander's party. Then we cut an archway between the two. When finished it looked pretty cosy. We could sit and talk in our house and visit with the people in the other house.

Now that we must remain at the floe until the lead closed it was necessary to hunt seals for dog-food ; for ten people and forty-five dogs can eat a tremendous quantity of food, and we had none too much. We stationed ourselves at intervals of a hundred and fifty or two hundred yards along the edge of the floe. The lead was now about a quarter of a mile wide, and the ice-pack on its opposite side was moving west-north-west at the rate of about a hundred yards per hour. By midnight it had increased in speed to about two hundred yards per hour and at 6 A.M. to three hundred yards.

A scum of mush-ice froze over the placid surface of the lead. However, the motion of the heavy ice offshore kept a lead constantly open in this mush-ice. This lead was only a few yards wide when the motion of the main ice-pack was sluggish, but, as its speed increased, the lead widened to fifty yards, and in places to two hundred yards.

The fifty-yard lead was just right for sealing, but although we saw and fired at numerous seals, Split and Natkusiak

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were the only ones who got any—one each. Natkusiak didn't tell us about his seal until evening, because he thought he would soon get another and then retrieve the two at the same time, but it was then too late to get it, for mush-ice had covered it over. Storkie and Castel rigged up a sledge with inflated seal-skin 'poks,' and Storkie paddled out after Split's seal. He had a difficult time in breaking his way through the mush-ice which was forming all round him. Then, while out in the very centre of the lead, one of the 'poks' started to leak air, rapidly becoming deflated. One corner of the sledge sank out of sight, and when Storkie finally got back to the edge of the ice his boots and trousers were pretty well soaked and he had to run quickly back to the camp before they froze stiff and cracked.

This was a good deal of trouble for such a small seal, but it gave the dogs half a feed of lean meat and a full feed of blubber.

With the exception of the Commander, who was busy with his correspondence, we took turns watching for seals; and, although we kept this up day and night, for we now had eighteen hours of sunlight, until the afternoon of the 11th, only one other seal was secured—this also by little Split. Altogether we had fired twenty-nine shots during the five days and nights—with only three hits. Pretty poor shooting. But then a seal's head does not make a very large target; and, although the temperature was only 25° below zero, there was wind most of the time, and this made it cold on our bare hands. One cannot use mitts when shooting, or at least, not the kind of mittens we had.

Storkie and Knight took a sounding (468 metres—brown mud bottom, current running north-west). The wind shifted and the offshore ice commenced to press in from the north-west, with the consequent narrowing of our lead.

By 4.40 P.M., April 12, the mush-ice covering the now narrow lead was six inches thick and we headed out to seaward. The Commander led the way, Storkie came

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next, then I, Castel, Natkusiak, Split, each in charge of our respective sledges. Pikalu, Knight, and Ikiuna were detailed to keep themselves in readiness to run to the assistance of any sledge which should upset ; and Charlie came last. Poor fellow, he was pretty weak, but game as could be.

CHAPTER XXII

NORTHWARD over the moving ice! The Commander jabbed his ice-chisel into the thin surface of the newly frozen lead with every step he took, signalling as he went that all was safe. We followed. A quarter of a mile ahead of us rose the solid ice of the main pack, a huge splintered mass of chaos. We scrambled to the top of the first pressure-ridge.

Our horizon lay only five hundred yards away, where another pressure-ridge, somewhat higher than ours, cut against the sky. Immediately below us, in the five-hundred-yard stretch between the ridges, was the maze of broken ice through which we must manœuvre. Stefansson went ahead to reconnoitre. We watched him descend slowly, picking his way among the ice-boulders and begin the ascent of the next ridge. Sometimes he disappeared from view, but at last we saw him again, as, using his chisel like a cane, he went up the steep slope of a long slab of ice which stood up like the upturned page of a book from the very centre of the ridge. On the top he stood still, resting on his chisel. We wondered what he saw behind that ridge—whether we were to have smooth going, or whether we should have to build a road to advance.

The Commander sat down on the edge of his overhanging perch and we saw him adjust his field-glasses. Slowly and carefully he made the circuit of the horizon in front of him and, after ten minutes of close scrutiny, he descended from his vantage-point and signalled us to remain where we were. He then made his way westward along the base, heading for another pinnacle which towered far above the long ridge. When he had gained the summit of this new look-out he again adjusted his glasses and looked round.

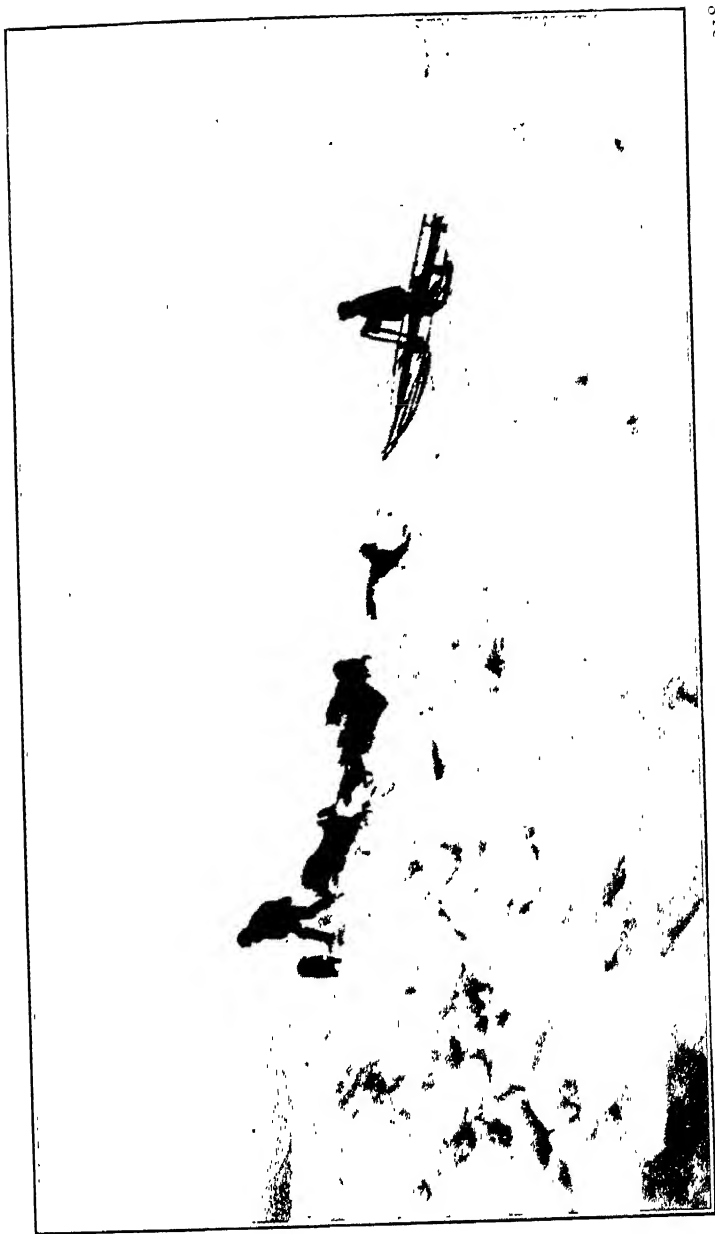
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But he soon turned toward us and waved his arms. He had found a breach through which we could advance.

Storkie and I took our heavy miners' picks and went ahead. Knight and Natkusiak followed with their snow-shovels. A straight course was impossible. We had to zigzag over the scattered heaps, pausing frequently to batter down boulders in our path and to fill in gullies with the splinters, to make a passable road for the sledges. We reached the ridge where the Commander was waiting without mishap, left our sledges at the base, and climbed up to see what the outlook was. It was rather bad—ridge after ridge, separated by fields of broken-up rubble. But the Commander encouraged us by saying that it was not nearly so rough as much that he had encountered on former ice trips.

The ice close to land is always much rougher than that far out to sea. The reason for this is that an onshore wind or current sets the ice-floes in motion, forcing them against a solid obstruction, such as land or landfast ice, so that when their edges meet the floes are broken and piled into these chaotic ridges, which vary in size and shape according to the intensity of the pressure and the thickness of the opposing ice-floes. The Commander said we could consider ourselves fortunate in that there were visible but few leads, and so one difficulty was eliminated. But this was also a handicap, for without open leads we should be unable to get seals for food.

Again we set out, with the Commander leading the way as before. Oftentimes we would halt the teams while we went ahead for a few hundred yards to build a trail over which we could take the sledges. We came to an exceptionally bad belt of rough ice and, as it was then midnight, stopped and pitched a tent. The Commander made tea for us while we built a road through the bad stretch of going. It took us an hour and a half of hard work with picks and shovels to finish the job; and when we got back to our sledges and crawled inside the tent where the Commander was 'serving tea' from a big aluminium



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kettle, we thanked our stars that the worst of the heavy going was behind us. For the ice ahead apparently consisted largely of floes of fairly smooth old ice. The ice we had just travelled over had all been young—none of it, I should say, much over six months old, except in places where it had been telescoped into the ridges I have just described.

After tea we continued our journey, but our route proved not so easy as it had looked. The floes, though old and heavy, were small and their edges were all crumpled up into ridges through which we had to build roads.

At last we got so tired that the Commander called a halt at noon, and, as the sun was shining brightly, we pitched our tents and slept in them for the first time that year. But we regretted it, for hoar-frost condensed on the walls and ceiling and dropped down on us while we slept, and the heat of our bodies thawed the frost, which fell on our bags and made them soaking wet.

We slept until 9 P.M. Another hour found us on our way again. At 2 A.M., April 15, we stopped to take a sounding at an open crack, having covered six miles, which was not so bad, considering the heavy going. In fact, the going was bad during the entire day, and as a consequence our trail was very crooked. Time and time again we had to make long *détours* to avoid impassable ridges. Our sledges would upset and roll over on their sides in such awkward positions that it would often take three or four men to right them again. After having gone another six miles we camped at an old crack in the heavy ice, and this time we again used tents, chiefly because we were done up after the strenuous day and were too lazy to build a snow-house, which we knew would have been more comfortable. We slept until 10 P.M. Then, after breakfast, we went on. At least we had light continually, for the Arctic night had completely vanished.

The floes we were travelling over were from thirty to sixty feet thick, in places even thicker than that. Sledging across them was like sledging across a mountain-top ; there

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to the floe, where, if conditions were favourable, seals could be obtained, and, if the floe were closed, they could, by making forced marches, reach land where they could hunt caribou or ovibos.

Our only cause for worry was poor Charlie. He had been getting gradually weaker and weaker. His receding gums were sore and bleeding and his teeth were all so loose that they could have been extracted with ease. It was a bitter thing for him to turn back—after all the long months of preparation, of hauling and relaying heavy loads, of building the long line of snow-houses—when the goal was almost in sight. No one who has not been on an advance party can adequately appreciate the feelings of the man who is forced to return with the support party.

We had been together on a good many hard trips and I had never heard Charlie complain of anything; never a cross word, always doing more than his share of the work, and singing and whistling as he did it. But Charlie realized that it was no use, and so he shook hands with only these words, "So long, Noice—good-bye and good luck!"

Storkie's party, whose loads were so light that Charlie could ride, made such good speed that in a few minutes they were lost to view behind the first pressure-ridge; once again we saw them, poised an instant on the top of the higher ridge beyond; then they were gone.

We should see none of our people again until mid-August. Then, if all went well, we should connect with the whole party at Kellett. When Gonzales left Grassy Lopez, Alingnak, and Guninana had accompanied him, and he had orders to pick up the women at Peddie Point—Mrs Storkerson, Mrs Lopez, and Pannigabluk—and take them to the *Polar Bear*. Storkerson's party, with the exception of Castel and Charlie, would go to the *Bear*. Castel and Charlie would join Captain Bernard at Kellett. If Bernard were not there—in view of Gonzales' report that 'if' had a tragic significance—Castel, who knew all about a ship, was to put the *Sachs* in trim. Storkie carried orders to Gonzales to bring the *Bear* to Kellett in the summer. There both

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of heavy freighting through the freezing blackness, finding new trails by lantern-light, and nearly breaking my neck a few times, I was sufficiently immune from imaginary terrors to accept, with reservations, Stefansson's axioms that "the polar regions are a state of mind," that a month of darkness is no more depressing than a night of it, that snow- and ice-ridges are as attractive as lawns and oak-trees as soon as one ceases to criticize them for not being lawns and oaks, and that the dangers of the moving ice are less than those of a city street. "Tumbling ice-cakes move more slowly than taxi-cabs, and therefore can be more readily evaded!"

CHAPTER XXIII

WHILE the Commander carried out an observation, I took an inventory of our provisions and found that we had left but a scant fifteen days' food for the dogs. In making this estimate I counted in as dog-feed everything that dogs could eat, such as our bacon, lard, pemmican, etc. We should keep for ourselves only the cereal food, such as rice, oatmeal, etc. This was to be rationed out at one pound per day. We had six pounds of butter, which was to be rationed out at the rate of an eighth of a pound to each man per day, as long as it lasted.

Our plans were to march north for ten days and at the end of that time should we still find ourselves in a gameless district we would retrace our steps. This would mean that our retreat would have to be made at double speed, for we should have but five days' provisions left.

These were, however, but tentative plans, for before our food-supply was exhausted we expected to run into good sealing ice, or even to find land with caribou or ovibos.

As we pushed farther offshore we met larger floes with comparatively small pressure-ridges between them. Whenever there were cracks or at newly frozen leads, whose ice was still thin enough to chop through, we stopped and sounded. Our soundings showed the sea-bottom to be of an undulating character which is one indication of a strait for had there been no land to the north or west of us the soundings would probably have become deeper and deeper as we got farther and farther offshore.

Four days after Storkie's departure found us still going north. We had seen no animal tracks and no sealing lead. We had now but two half-days' fat for the dogs, and only our eighth of a pound per day of butter for ourselves. (

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course the lean food—*i.e.*, pemmican, rice, oatmeal, etc.—would still hold out for another eleven days; and we still hoped to get game before then.

Our loads were not nearly so heavy as those we had hauled during the winter, but there was considerable snowfall, which made trail conditions bad. We still had Mike, Red, Tulugak, Comic, and old Hans and Split's racing-team; although they were the pick of all our dogs, and did their level best to drag the sledges through the snowdrifts, yet most of them were getting pretty old and we had to help them out continually.

On the seventh day we came to an open lead which was about two hundred yards wide. While the Commander and Split went along the lead to look for seals, Knight and I also went out along the edge of the lead to hunt. The ice on both sides was apparently thirty or forty feet thick, and the lead, though fine for shooting purposes, was barren. At any rate, we saw no seals. We discussed the situation. Apparently the sea had its deserts like the land, and we had entered one. We could only guess at its area.

We were now confronted by a rather serious predicament. The wide-open lead running east and west directly across our path barred northward progress, and our food-supply was dwindling. The Commander, on his former trips, had always crossed this kind of lead by converting his sledges into boats. This was done by lashing round their sides and bottoms a large oiled canvas, which he carried for that very purpose. The camp gear, dogs, and provisions were then ferried across to the other side and the journey resumed. But this oiled canvas, having become old and full of holes, could no longer be used. A new oiled canvas was one of the most necessary things, and we had expected the *Polar Bear* to bring it to Melville. Gonzales could have brought it that winter to Grassy on his sledge, but he had brought pies from Levi instead.

Knight and I wanted to travel west along the lead in search of a crossing-place, but the Commander sat down on top

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of an ice-cake and told us not to be in such a great hurry as he thought the lead would probably close up in a little while.

He had hardly spoken when we saw small pieces of mush-ice tilting upon the other side of the lead. The ice was in motion. It began to move more quickly. The stretch of water between the two floes was getting noticeably narrower and narrower. Soon there was no water in sight. Then the mush-ice, which always forms along the sides of the main packs adjacent to the open water, met in the centre and began to buckle up into a miniature pressure-ridge. The two main packs were steadily grinding on toward each other. The Commander told us to load the sledges and harness the dogs quickly, for we must be ready to cross over to the other side the moment the two floes touched.

We waited, the Commander holding my leader dog's harness, and I at the stern of my sledge ready to steer. Split and Knight were behind me doing the same with their teams. The two big packs crowded closer and closer. Our dogs became excited at the din the blocks made tumbling about, falling, rising, splashing, groaning. At last the two big packs touched, squeezing together all the broken-up young ice between them and spewing it out on top into a ridge six or eight feet high.

Now was the time for getting across. The Commander pulled my leader dog up to the ridge. I yelled at the dogs and lifted and shoved the sledge. Up we went, paused a second on top of the squirming pack, and bolted down to the heavy ice on the other side.

Split and Knight followed close behind. When we had reached a safe distance we stopped to watch the fun. For the battle of the floes was on. The two great fields of ice, miles and miles in extent, continued to press against one another, each intent only on crushing the life out of its opponent—or so it seemed to me. As the pressure intensified the edges of the two great floes, being unable to stand the strain, began to buckle upward. They rose in two

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gigantic sheets until they stood bolt upright, all bare and green with dripping sea-water. Then the tops of each slowly leaned backward—farther and farther backward. *Crunch!* came the ice. The two great masses, now leaning out at an angle of 45° , snapped with a report that could have been heard for ten miles or more, and clattered to the bottom, where they lay prostrate like two exhausted giants.

But not for long. *Crunch! Smash! Bang!* Once more the ice moved forward, picking up the two fallen foes and thrusting them to one side—discarded pawns in the game of Nature.

Then almost instantly everything became dead still. The battle was over and the two floes lay side by side—"enormous, majestic, silent, and terrible."

Onward again! Trail conditions now grew worse, due to soft snow, which was from knee- to hip-deep in places. Our dogs were weakening, all the more so because of lack of fat in their food.

As time went on and our food-supply continued to diminish, things began to look blue. But this was not the first time we had run short of provisions, and we were not so worried as we otherwise might have been, for everything seemed to indicate that land was not far distant. The soundings we took daily continued to show an undulating sea-bottom; we had had strong winds, and the ice had not drifted appreciably, as shown by our solar observations; and, again, the nature of the ice itself was of the kind generally found in land-enclosed waters at these latitudes (80°).

But did we dare to go much farther? It was becoming more risky every day. Then the wise idea occurred to me that if Knight and Split were sent back to Melville Island the Commander and I could travel on farther than the four of us would be able to do, because if Knight and Split returned to land with the racing-team they would not need any more food in proportion than Storkie's party had taken, and therefore Stefansson and I could take the

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balance. And as all our observations seemed to indicate that land was close by, we might be able to reach it, and then live off the new land, just as we had lived off Loughheed Island the year before. Needless to say, when I ventured to suggest this to the Commander he refused most emphatically. As I look back on it, it really astounds me to think of the patience he must have had to argue with such a foolhardy youth. Although Stefansson loves an argument better than anything else in life, out in the midst of the polar desert, with a vital decision to be made, was hardly the place and the time to start one.

It seems absurd now that he should have been obliged to explain to me the obvious fact that if he were to let Knight and Split go back he would be exposing them to peril, and that furthermore we should ourselves be in a very dangerous position if our sledges should break down, or if either of us should get sick.

Two days later, on April 26, the Commander ordered the retreat. Our observations put us in north latitude $80^{\circ} 26'$ and west longitude $109^{\circ} 50'$, or 125 miles offshore from Isachsen Land. A hundred and twenty-five miles offshore on moving ice in a polar desert, and with but five days' food on hand! We were seven hundred miles from our nearest people and it was not a good game country. Although the food situation was grave, food seemed a very secondary consideration on that first day of our retreat. We had a greater gloom of defeat—the abandonment of the ice trip on which we had staked so much; the forced return when just one day's onward travel might bring us to land.

Because overcast weather and falling snow made the light poor, and we dared not run the risk of getting snow-blind, we camped at the end of only ten miles. The following day we reached and made camp at our April 23rd camp-site. A raging blizzard sprang up during the night and blew all the next day.

It was while we were stormbound at this camp that it finally dawned upon me that Knight and I were developing

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scurvy. For several days I had been feeling rather badly. At first there was a dull ache in my right knee, which I thought was but a touch of rheumatism. But later I began to realize that I was losing strength gradually, for the ordinary exertion of managing my sledge made me feel excessively tired at the end of the day's travel.

We were in about as grave a situation as men are ever called on to meet in the Arctic. But there was no panic. We had confidence in our leader; and we had become thoroughly imbued with the idea that intelligence is naturally the victor. We had only to proceed in a systematic, orderly, competent manner, and to refuse to entertain any gloomy suggestions which might come into our minds, recognizing them as habitual in scurvy, symptoms of that disease and not of the Arctic, and to expect to come out all right. On page 616 of *The Friendly Arctic*, Stefansson says of the two sick men that Knight, though "no longer able to be of material help . . . certainly did his best, and it was admirable what fortitude both he and Noice showed and how hard they tried to be of use." I know that Knight did struggle to do his bit in spite of his sufferings, and I hope I did the same. We were uncomfortable enough, but I do not recall that we ever felt afraid, or doubted the outcome.

We were trying to follow our old trail back to land, but the gale had caused a lead a hundred yards wide to open directly across our path, and we travelled along its edge in the hope of finding a crossing-place. A mile and a half of travel along this lead brought us to a place where it petered out and we thought we should be able to proceed. But here our troubles began anew. For we soon saw that a great lead running north and south prevented all eastern progress, and several other leads joining this one ran in westerly directions. This prevented all southward progress.

We camped at this intersection of the leads. That evening Knight and I both felt weaker, and the pain in my joints bothered me more than previously.

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While we were sleeping that night there was a big dog-fight, and before we could stop it, Tip, one of our best dogs, was put out of commission. His condition was not serious, however, and in a few days he had recovered completely.

The following day we worked our way west along the lead, finally camping at a place where the ice peninsula jutted out to within fifty yards of the other side. We decided to wait here until ice motion would permit us to utilize this peninsula as a bridge. The 2nd of May dawned bright and clear, but as our lead had not yet closed sufficiently for us to cross, the Commander, Knight, and Split went out to hunt for seals. Knight fired at the only seal they saw and missed it. It was rough luck, but it was hardly his fault, for the seal had been out of good shooting range. However, Knight felt depressed at having missed, although we tried to cheer him up.

The hunters had no sooner returned than a sudden blizzard made further hunting impossible. The storm continued to rage all night, while we lay in our flapping, fireless tents and tried to be cheerful. But it wasn't so easy. We were now on reduced rations, and we were still sixty miles from land. Isachsen Land was the nearest, and the Commander decided to head directly for it as soon as we could get across our lead.

On May 3 the wind abated and our lead closed. We crossed over on our ice bridge only to find ourselves confronted by another wide-open lead, where we camped. A chunk of ice about ten yards long by five yards wide projected out into the lead at this point, and as it was already semi-detached, being joined to the main floe by a narrow isthmus, the Commander thought we could chop this isthmus in two and then use the ice-cake for a raft to carry us over to the other side of the lead. We set to work chopping away and, after eight hours of hard work, had almost succeeded, when the ice on the other side commenced to move laterally, breaking our fine raft loose and carrying it away!

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later we made camp, and fed to our half-starved dogs some of our worn-out skin clothing, for our dog-feed was now all gone.

Despite the gloomy state of mind brought on by disease and the many days' struggle with hunger (we had been on short rations for a long time), we were still optimistic, solely because of our faith in the Commander.

A year before when we had landed on Loughheed Island Stefansson had gone inland and immediately killed caribou. Again, when we had landed on Melville Island in the autumn of the same year we had been reduced to short rations, and our dogs to eating boot-soles, but the Commander killed ovibos the day after we reached shore. And so now when we caught sight of him returning to camp we felt sure he had once more 'brought home the bacon.'

While he was still a mile or so away Split took up his glasses to see if he were carrying a back-load of meat. Split said he could not tell what the Commander was carrying, because he was coming straight toward us, but just then Stefansson made a turn to avoid a snowdrift and so presented a side view. Split's face fell. We knew then that the search for game had been unsuccessful; the hunter was returning empty-handed.

We crawled back inside and made a pot of tea, so as to have something hot ready for him. It was not long before we heard his footsteps, then *thump! thump!* and his snowshoes and cartridge-bag were tossed against the tent side. He opened the flap and came in and sat down among us. As he took a huge mug of piping-hot tea his face became more cheerful, despite the story he had to tell.

"Well, boys, it looks as if we had at last struck one of those terrible barren islands we have all read about. I haven't seen a blade of grass or a bit of moss or the track of a living thing all day long."

The next day we drew our belts a little tighter (just as they do in story-books) and set out south along the coast, while the Commander again took up the search for food. We had made about eight miles when Split, who was

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leading, suddenly stopped, his eyes riveted upon something ashore. He came running back to the sledge and grabbed his binoculars.

Following the direction indicated by his glasses, Knight and I saw several whitish-grey dots, looking like so many snowy owls, on the seaward slope of a hill scarcely two miles away. They moved! Others came into view. They were caribou! Game at last! Almost magically everything looked brighter, for we knew it would be only a question of time now before we should be well again.

We pitched the tent at once, and Split took his gun and went inland to reconnoitre; for the caribou were so close to the sea-coast that we thought the Commander, who generally walked straight inland immediately upon leaving us, might not be able to see them because of intervening hills.

A sudden fog hid both Split and the caribou. One hour, then two, three slipped by. Still there was no sign of life. Momentarily we expected to hear shots, but everything was blanketed in fog. Knight and I crawled out of the tent every few minutes to see if the fog were lifting, but it was just as thick as ever. We were beginning to wonder if Split had made a false move and startled the caribou, in which case it would probably be six or eight hours before they could be reapproached.

More fog and still no news. Suddenly I heard a shout. Knight and I crawled outside to watch the approach of the hunters, for Stefansson and Split were returning to camp. We were unable to see if they were bringing any meat, for Split had taken our only other pair of binoculars; Knight, being unable to stand the suspense, stumbled on to meet them. As the hunters drew near I saw plainly that they carried no packs—that their search for food had ended in failure. There was nothing else to do but to creep back into the dismal tent. Then, as I lay wondering how many more days we could hold out, the tent flap was thrown back and two bloodstained hands, holding a bunch of bloody caribou-tongues, were thrust inside! Little

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Split had tiptoed up unawares ! A moment later good old Stef entered the tent, beaming triumphantly. Good-bye to scurvy, worry, and want, for twenty-three caribou lay dead only a short distance inland ! While we cooked the tongues Stefansson related the great adventure. In the morning, shortly after leaving us, he had found some old caribou-tracks. Then, a little later, he had seen the fresh tracks of a large band and had followed these until he caught sight of the same band as we had seen. While stalking them the fog had come on, and he had had to wait until it lifted before daring to advance. Split, in the meantime, had seen the Commander, who had often cautioned him against the danger of two men trying for the same band of caribou without some prearranged plan of attack, and had made a great circle round the caribou so as to approach Stefansson from behind. The fog had come on and Split had crawled up to within two hundred yards of him, when the fog lifted and then they both began shooting. There were twenty-three in the band, and when the shooting was over twenty-three dead animals attested to the good marksmanship of the hunters.

After feasting we moved camp over to the meat. Before starting out the Commander and Split let the dogs smell their hands. This made them jump and strain at their traces in anticipation of the feed they were to get. It was all Split could do to keep ahead of eighteen famished dogs who scented the first whiff of fresh meat they had for many a day.

We called this place "Camp Hospital," and a hospital it was indeed, for when we arrived I was unable to walk more than a few yards at a time, and Knight, although not so weak as I, was nevertheless pretty wobbly on his legs and could have held out only a few days longer. Our camp was situated on a little hilltop in the midst of rolling prairie country, and the weather turned warm and our hill-top, already swept nearly free of snow by the wind, began to thaw. It was a cheerful spot.

After making us as comfortable as possible, the Com-

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mander and Split went out to hunt for fatted caribou, for those they had killed were all lean, and lean meat is not nearly as palatable or nutritious as fat meat.

We stayed at Camp Hospital for the next two weeks, and during our stay we cooked but one meal a day. This was partly because we had insufficient fuel for cooking purposes, but chiefly because raw meat is a much better antiscorbutic than cooked meat, and so we ate slices of half-thawed meat at intervals of every few minutes all day long.

It might seem strange that Knight and I were the only ones stricken with scurvy, but on talking matters over we found that the Commander and Split, who had spent a large part of their time during the winter at the base-camp, had eaten a considerable quantity of fresh meat along with the provisions hauled from the Bernier cache. Scurvy can be prevented by fresh meat as well as by fresh vegetables. Knight and I had been on the trail most of the winter, and were therefore forced for the most part to eat condensed foods. This was partly because fresh meat contains about 60 per cent. of water and is consequently unsuited for heavy freighting rations. Had the danger of scurvy occurred to us, we could have saved ourselves by eating the meat of the seals which we had killed at the floe just before we started out on the moving ice.

The Commander and Split spent most of the time while we were convalescent in hunting and in charting the peninsula on which we had landed. They established a hunting-camp about eight miles from Camp Hospital, and every day or so Split used to drive in with his fast team and bring us some special delicacies—choice tit-bits, marrow-bones, etc., which the Commander sent in to us.

It was surprising how rapidly Knight and I recovered. In two weeks all the symptoms of our illness were gone, and we were again ready for the trail.

Although the crisis had passed and all danger from scurvy and starvation was over, we were still about 450 miles from our ships. Our exploratory work was now

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at an end and all our thoughts were centred on the homeward journey. Our first 'port of call' was to be Loughheed Island.

On May 27 we started south. The ice between us and Loughheed was in pleasant contrast to the complexities of the pack-ice to the westward. It was almost floor-like and our light sledges sped merrily along.

CHAPTER XXIV

WE were now back on our old camping-ground of the summer before, and Stefansson and I used to take delight as we tramped over the familiar country in recognizing old landmarks. It was just like getting back home again.

The only drawback to an otherwise corking good time was a shortage of kerosene, and we again had to resort to our old way of cooking—cutting up small cubes of caribou-meat and boiling them. But a surprise was in store for us. Five days after we landed Split found a coal-mine! A hill of coal! Fine, dry lignite, some of it as dry as tinder and as thin as paper! We hauled about five hundred pounds of this coal from the mine and camped for a few days in order to cook a large amount of meat to take with us on our southward journey, so as to do away with hauling much fuel for cooking. During the two weeks of hunting and feasting we meandered down to our old summer camp, where we took a series of astronomical observations to check our previous year's work.

Birds now began to make their appearance—snow-buntings, gulls, jaegers, Hutchins's geese, sandpipers; for spring had arrived with warm, bright, sunshiny days, which quickly dispersed the winter's snows. By the time we were ready to leave the island patches of green dotted the hills. On June 12 we took to the ice again.

Five days later we arrived at Bradford Point, Melville Island. Although there had been thaw-water along the beach at Lougheed, we found none on the sea-ice until we got to within a mile of the Melville Island shore.

We now began to see signs of polar bears, the first we had come across that year. One night while sleeping we

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heard a great rumpus. The Commander poked his head out of the tent just in time to see a bear charging our dogs, who were barking furiously and jerking their chains. He grabbed a rifle, which was always left beside the door, and without going outside took a shot at the bear, which was then within twenty-five yards of the dogs. The bear lurched forward, rolling half the remaining distance to the dogs. Then he got up and faced round. The Commander put another bullet into him, and he started to run off, but soon succumbed.

We travelled south along the east coast of Melville Island, and turned its south-east corner on June 25, where we found a beacon built by the Bernier Expedition. The cairn was of rock, about five feet high, and contained the following record, which was enclosed in a Mason fruit-jar.

RECORD FROM C.G.S. "ARCTIC"

Know all men that on this date, 16th August, 1909, the Canadian Government steamer *Arctic* passed here bound for Pond's Inlet.

Remarks: We anchored here on the 15th instant on account of the Byam Martin Channel being full of heavy ice. We wintered at Winter Harbour. Left 12th August. Ice just gone. We are all well on board.

J. E. BERNIER,
Commanding Officer

There was aboard the *Polar Bear* a book which all of us had read with interest. This was Captain Bernier's report of his first expedition to Melville Island, during which he had visited an historic cache, the depot left in the year 1853 by Captain Kellett of the Franklin Search Expedition. This depot, which was located on Dealy Island, was one of the largest of its kind, and contained, according to the musty document which Bernier had found, buried ten feet due north of a high beacon, "provisions for 66 men for 288 days."

The roof of the large stone edifice in which the provisions were housed had been blown off by a hurricane, and Bernier

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had put on a canvas one in 1909. This cache was on our route, about fifty miles farther on.

As we continued our journey along the coast game became so plentiful that we were much tempted to spend the spring and summer there and make another ice trip the following year. But the Commander decided that our equipment was insufficient. Our sledges were now so weakened that they could not carry a heavy load, and some of our scientific instruments had been broken, while others were in need of repairs which could only be effected by experts.

On the evening of the third day after finding Bernier's beacon, while we were rounding a point at the eastern end of a rather shallow bay, we caught sight of what looked like a black teepee on top of a hill about six miles distant, on the other side of the bay.

As we approached we saw a pole sticking up from the centre of the now clearly outlined pyramid. It was the beacon above the Dealy Island cache.

The great black, painted monument of rocks with its thirty feet spire guided us directly to the depot. Had we arrived a day or so sooner we should have been unable to see the house; even now all but one corner of it was buried by a huge snowbank, for the structure had been built at the very foot of a steep hill, and on the lee side, where drifts always accumulate.

We removed Bernier's canvas roof, which had sagged in with snow, so that the sun could dry things; for everything inside was soaking wet, and the great oaken barrels, three tiers deep, stood cased in snow and ice.

We opened several of the barrels. Some contained heavy wool sweaters; others fine brass-buttoned, scarlet-coloured and satin-lined broadcloth pea-jackets; others had brightly coloured, fancifully designed mittens. There were barrels of long leather sea-boots, felt shoes, knitted underwear.

But I have been getting ahead of my story, for the first barrels we opened were those labelled "Flour," "Peas,"

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this perilous North and he would hie him far south to Paget Sound. There he would open a floating grocery and grow rich chugging it up and down the balmy, smooth lagoons and round the smiling isles to the strawberry farms and the homesteaders' truck patch. No more polar regions for him. Heigho, for the dreams of the South we dream in the North! Only a few months later Knight was out again on the moving ice, and at the time of writing he is second in command of an expedition on Wrangel Island.¹

Stefansson was going to write a book depicting the North as he knew it and loved it. He mumbled through the fudge about the problems of that book. A book really should not be longer than five hundred pages, but how to cover five years' activity in five hundred pages—impossible! This book would have to be longer; and it would be a failure, of course. What! A *failure*, with his new land discoveries, his theory of living off the country proved, his new picture of this vast territory with grass, flowers, coal? "Precisely," said Stefansson, "every acre of grass, every patch of flowers, would handicap the book, because grass, flowers particularly, would interfere with the popular conception of the Arctic as a place eternally covered with snow and ice, and useless to man except as an appropriate stage-setting for heroics.

"And there is nothing which the human mind resents so much as being told that its preconceived ideas are false. The book will be unpopular, and I shall be branded as a faker. Well, it won't be the first time that a man has been ostracized for telling the truth. I shall have all the satisfaction of saying what I please, with the glory of martyrdom thrown in. Why didn't you make more fudge, Noice? There will be none left for Knight and Split."

Things didn't quite fall out as Stef had forecasted; but he was right about the fudge.

¹ Little Split died of influenza a few days after he reached Nome. Knight went north again in 1921 as second in command of Stefansson's Wrangel Island Expedition. He died of scurvy June 22, 1923.

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"How about you, Noice?" Knight asked.

"I think I'll stick around and take a look at the 'Copper' Eskimos."

"And get eaten up like Gonzales says he nearly did!" Knight's jest was almost a prophecy, for not so long afterward I was condemned to death by the 'Copper' Eskimos for breaking a taboo.

This was not the first time that Knight had dropped an uncomplimentary hint about Gonzales. In fact, while we had been slushing through the thaw-water on the ice the last few days Knight had said that the *Polar Bear* not only ought to have been there, but *could* have been there, to sail us out and save us the long journey to Kellett. About this time, as I remember it, he gave us the story in detail. The comical aspect of that story has taken precedence of all others in my memory. Gonzales could have sailed the *Bear* to Winter Harbour, in obedience to the Commander's orders, for the strait had been free of ice; but he had deliberately ignored those orders and sailed 100 miles south. Why? The answer is a little one-act comedy-drama entitled *The Ladies' Mutiny*. When the wives of Gonzales and Seymour learned that the *Bear* was to go north, and, moreover, that on the conclusion of our ice trip she was to sail east to Atlantic waters and south to Montreal instead of to Herschel Island, and that they themselves would have to go home to Herschel with the families of Illun and Pikalu, they fell to weeping and wailing; for they realized that they would then be left husbandless. The possibly permanent loss of the stalwart and henpecked Seymour and the dashing Gonzales was too terrible to contemplate. Who would buy new records then for Annie's phonograph? And silk stockings for her to dance in at Herschel? For Annie's youth was passing and her captivating eye was becoming less sure. And Mamayauk too, who had queened it on the ship as a captain's bride, in scarlet and purple, asked herself whence such robes would be forthcoming hereafter. Traders' goods were dearer than before, and captains were scarce now that

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the great whaling days were done. And so they wept, and wept, and wept. And the wives of Illun and Pikalu, loyal to their sisters in grief, wept with them. Knight said that everything in the winter quarters was drenched with tears. And the men succumbed.

Gonzales was in command; Seymour, first mate of the *Bear*, was his henchman. The crew was in sympathy with them, and the protests of Knight and Hadley were unavailing. I have said that Stefansson bought his staff with the *Polar Bear* when Chance sent the little whaling-ship, with all of us aboard, to Kellett. And Chance, as history relates, is a goddess with a sardonic sense of humour; else she had never offered Gonzales as an aid to science. Gonzales was a pretty good whaler, a fair seaman, brave enough in the face of danger, particularly when danger called upon the Congo strain in him for the picturesque pose and the melodramatic gesture.

He was kind to dogs, and soft-hearted toward children—and women. But new islands north, soundings, currents, sea-bottoms, meteorological observations, were to him only the childish diversions of a fool. He looked upon Stefansson more or less as an easy-going fellow, whom he had to humour to a certain extent for the sake of his pay, of course, whose orders he was justified in discounting when he pleased.

Also, the fact that Storkerson was a big man on Melville influenced Gonzales not to go there; the two men had clashed early; and Storkerson's greater efficiency on the trail, when he had dragged Gonzales home, doubtless rankled deeply. What if his disobedience should jeopardize or wreck Stefansson's scientific programme for the year? To Gonzales, if he were capable of thinking about it at all, it would mean merely some more foolishness prevented.

"What dat kin' of man doin' in de Nort' anyways? He better stayed home where dey look after him," he had said to Seymour.

And Seymour, after having given the matter due thought, had answered solemnly: "Search me."

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Beyond making us 'sore,' Knight's story had little effect, for we should not see much of the *Polar Bear* and her crew. We were bound for Kellett and the *Mary Sachs*, commanded by the loyal Peter Bernard and our staunch Charlie and Castel. The two ships would sail out together, but we on the *Sachs* should not have to hobnob with Gonzales. I have said that we looked forward to seeing our loyal comrades again, and we did anticipate this meeting, chiefly because we were all optimists.

But the memory of the difficulties which we had experienced during our own retreat through the polar desert, and the knowledge that Storkerson's party had but ten days' dog-feed when they left us there, and that Charlie was sick with scurvy, combined in our minds to make us anxious about them. And also we had not forgotten the disquieting story which Gonzales had told us at Grassy about Bernard and Thomsen and the Kilians. This undercurrent of anxiety made us quicken our pace.

A rather monotonous trip of slushing through the thaw-water, waist-deep in places, over the eighty miles of Melville Sound, was broken by one lively incident.

We were nearly across the sound, and the north-west tip of Victoria Island was in plain sight, when one afternoon, while travelling over an exceptionally hummocky stretch of old ice, the Commander who was leading, suddenly stopped dead still, raised himself on tiptoe, and peered over the top of a hummock. He then faced round and motioned for us to stop the sledges and keep quiet. Most of the dogs, who were footsore and only too glad for a chance to rest, lay down without their suspicions being aroused by Stefansson's stealthy movements. He came tiptoeing toward us, occasionally glancing over his shoulder. We knew there must be game ahead, and so we pulled our rifles from their cases and had them ready for whatever should turn up. When the Commander reached us he whispered, "Upset the sledges and have your whips ready to stop the dogs; a bear is over there behind that hummock and is heading so as to pass close to us."

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Knight and I looked at each other. "When we become Commander maybe we can do some shooting," was what we thought.

We did as we were told, while Stefansson, taking his gun, made his way carefully back to the hummock.

Ordinarily these movements would have created a lot of excitement among the dogs, but now that most of them were tired only one paid any attention to the Commander. This was a Victoria Island dog named Tip, who had the reputation of being a great 'bear dog.' Tip knew that something was in the wind, and he stood up all attention, tail out straight, his small pointed ears erect, and his sharp black, beady eyes fixed on the Commander, who had laid himself down on the ice-hummock to wait for the bear to come closer.

Then we caught a glimpse of the bear. He went over a hummock and disappeared into the trough between.

Tip also had seen him. He jumped and tugged and howled and barked, itching to get loose. This roused the other dogs, and when the bear reappeared a few seconds later, it was all we could do to prevent them from dragging the overturned sledges into the water-holes in pursuit. Stefansson was still on top of his hummock waiting for a chance to shoot. When the bear, who had heard the racket and was trying to get away, indiscreetly climbed on top of another hummock about three hundred yards away, the Commander put a bullet into him. He lurched off at a wobbly trot.

Stefansson was just about to fire again when Sapsuk, whom we had let run loose because his feet were sore, and whom we had entirely forgotten, also decided to take a hand in the fight, and started in pursuit of the bear. He was in the line of fire, and so the Commander did not dare to shoot for fear of hitting him. We knew that Sapsuk had had no experience with bears, and, fearing that he might be killed, we turned Tip and several other lively dogs loose. But Sapsuk had too much of a start. We saw him reach the bear, run right up to him, and bite

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him tentatively in the leg. The bear swung round and struck Sapsuk down with a blow from his massive forepaw and then ambled away. But he was losing strength from his wound, and the other dogs quickly surrounded him.

Although Tip had been more excited than any of the others, yet when he reached the bear he became the coolest of them all. It was good sport to watch the attack. The bear would run a few yards, surrounded by all the dogs, then Tip would slip up behind and give him a quick, sharp bite in the heel and jump nimbly to one side. Thereupon the bear would face round to fight his assailant, but Tip would be out of danger, standing as though nothing had happened and looking so innocent that the bear could not tell which dog had bitten him. Then several of the others tried to duplicate Tip's performance, but not being 'bear dogs' they were so clumsy that it was more luck than skill that saved them from poor Sapsuk's fate. However, they soon decided that discretion was after all the better part of valour, and contented themselves by merely jumping up and down and barking at a respectful distance from the bear, while it was left for Tip to bring him to a halt whenever he started off.

But this did not last long, for in the meantime the Commander had approached, and he soon ended the fight.

We went over to see Sapsuk's body; but, greatly to our surprise, he was still alive, although his hind-quarters were paralyzed. Hoping that this might be only temporary, we camped, and, after skinning the bear, spread out his skin and placed Sapsuk on it. He lay there quietly, apparently glad to have had the last say after all. He was much better after his night's rest, although still unable to walk. We made a soft bed for him in the centre of Split's sledge, and here Sapsuk rode in state.

As we approached the Banks Island shore the ice became increasingly unsafe, rotten and full of holes. After manœuvring about from ice-cake to ice-cake we finally zig-zagged in to the edge of the shore lead, which was about two hundred yards wide.

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This might have been serious, for we had fed our seal-skin 'poks' to the dogs during our search for game on Isachsen Land, and our sledge canvas was full of holes; we had therefore no means of crossing this lead except by using a cake of ice as a ferry. Fortunately there was a loose cake handy which, although not very large, yet was large enough for carrying about a third of our load. The Commander and I ferried the first load across together, using shovels for paddles, and when we got close to the beach poled our ice-raft along with our tent-poles. Then, while I returned for a second load, he went to look for a good camp-site. Knight and Split made the next trip, and then Split came back with the raft and we moved the remainder ashore.

We landed near a fine harbour, which the Commander named Knight Harbour in honour of Knight, who, having been there previously, now recognized landmarks and guided us to it.

The ice in Prince of Wales Strait was so badly broken up and water-eaten that all travel on it was out of the question. In fact, several days later we saw miles of open water near the opposite shore which indicated that the final break-up had come. We must perforce make the remaining distance to Kellett overland and carry everything we intended to take along.

We pitched our tent on a little patch of clean, dry gravel, and while Stefansson went out to explore the land and hunt we made preparations for the overland journey. Split made a large needle out of a nail, and then we cut up our sledge-canvas and sewed it into dog- and man-packs. It took us two days to complete this work, and on the third we constructed a cache by standing our sledges on end and lashing them together at the top. There we made a platform in the **A** thus formed, upon which we deposited those articles which were too heavy to take with us.

Sapsuk had improved so much that he was able to stagger along behind when we started on the 28th, but we did not travel more than five miles because he was as yet rather weak.

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We were again beginning to run short of provisions, for this part of Banks Island, not being good game country, had not as yet provided us with food.

The next day we continued our travel along the beach, while Stefansson walked inland parallel to us and hunted, but he had no luck. As our provisions now consisted of only a little bear-fat and some dried peas from the cache, we dug up some roots, which we found growing in the sandy soil not far from the lead, and cooked these in the remainder of our bear-fat.

The following day was another day of disappointment and again we ate roots for supper. These tasted fairly good, but gave us indigestion. However, our troubles were soon forgotten, for Stefansson, the next day, killed two caribou several miles inland. I took some of the dogs and fetched the meat back to camp.

Although Banks Island is mapped in detail, we found the chart to be so inaccurate that the Commander decided to correct it as we went along. So when we had commenced the overland journey it had been my work to survey the coastline while Stefansson hunted and covered the inland topography.

Knight and Split had their hands full managing the dogs. It was funny to see the dogs with their outlandish packs, some topheavy, others lopsided. Some carried pails and cups and caribou-skins, others carried geological and other specimens. Hans was the worst nuisance of them all, for although he was the fattest dog of the lot, he absolutely refused to take more than a ten-pound load; if we put another pound on him he lay down and refused to budge. Also, because he was fat and felt the heat, he made it a special point to lie down in every puddle we came to and get his pack all wet. Some of the dogs were faster and more lively than others and had a tendency to run all over the country in search of lemmings or to chase young birds. But Split walked just ahead of them and carried one of our long bamboo tent-poles, with which he would bang any one that tried to get ahead of him. Knight brought up

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the rear, also carrying a long pole with which he would prod any one that lagged behind. In travelling overland it is essential to keep the dogs together, so that they may be quickly secured and chained up whenever caribou are sighted; otherwise they would chase the caribou and be apt to lose their packs or get them snagged on willows or between the rocks and held prisoners.

The coastal region was poor for hunting, and so the Commander decided on the fifth day after leaving Cape Russell to discontinue our survey of the coast and strike directly overland for Cape Kellett.

We had a good time crossing Banks Island, and it made us feel like singing and shouting to be able to travel over such beautiful country, especially after our long trips over the more inhospitable lands and seas to the north. Although we were still more than four hundred miles north of the Arctic Circle, there on Banks Island we had luxuriant grass, moss, willows, and the much-prized heather, which last we used for fuel. The summer evenings on that trip, in retrospect, blend in one perfect picture—a tent and crackling camp-fire under a clear blue sky, a placid lake in view, a crystal stream to sing to us, the dogs staked out, lolling in the grass, an owl hooting, a great white gull winging slowly by, and just the four of us seated there on a huge flat rock. The caribou were fat and there were plenty of them. We used to boil kettlefuls of the fine, rich meat, and always saw to it that we had enough left over from breakfast for lunch. When we stopped every day at 11.30 A.M. to take our noon observations we used to make tea and eat cold tongues or ribs or briskets along with it.

As we proceeded we made a rough map of the country, marking our new discoveries of numerous lakes and the source of the large river which, after traversing nearly half of Banks Island, empties into Castel Bay, just west of Mercy Bay. In addition to these discoveries we found another coal-mine, which was really a wood-mine, half coal, half wood. Some of it was red, and there was a considerable

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A thick fog drifted in from the west that night ; it did not bother us in camp, but we wondered how Stefansson was getting along, for he was travelling over an unknown country.

Fortunately the fog had lifted by morning, and as Split was feeling much better we set out. We camped that night twenty miles nearer Kellett. The next day's travel brought us another twenty miles nearer. It was good to hear Knight's big, hearty voice boom out when on the following morning we set out on the last lap of our journey : " All right, boys, mush up ! Get in there, Red—no loafing ! Come now, Whisky—shake a leg ! Hans, you villain, quit your nonsense ! " as he brought up the rear of our little army.

This last day's travel was the easiest, for we did not stop to hunt caribou. With no meat to carry, a number of our dogs had no loads. This was especially welcome to me, for I had borne a forty-pound pack ever since our overland journey began. In addition to my rifle and sleeping-bag, I had lugged an ovibos-hide, two pairs of knitted underwear, a heavy woollen sweater, and three pairs of knitted mittens which the Commander had allowed me to take home as souvenirs of Captain Kellett's cache. Knight and Split also had some souvenirs which they were carrying in addition to their packs, but now that several of the dogs had no loads we let them relieve us of part of ours.

We stopped at noon while I took an observation for latitude. The observation put us just four miles north of Kellett, and, by our reckoning from my last time-sight, we were about twelve miles east. A few miles more and we caught sight of the ocean, a broad expanse of ice-free water. We heaved a sigh of relief. Another few miles and we came to a hill which commanded a view of the Kellett base. I sat down on a rock and levelled my glasses. Hurrah ! The ship ! Knight and I danced round and Split did a Highland fling, while our dogs cast puzzled glances in our direction. But after our first excitement had subsided we saw that this ship had only one mast.

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Both the *Polar Bear* and the *Sachs* were two-masted schooners. We wondered what boat this could be. We descended from our hill and travelled along the top of a bulging ridge which runs eastward from Kellett. The ship was now cut off from our view, and we did not see it again until an hour and a half later, when, breathless, we reached the brow of the ridge and saw the Kellett base at our feet, a scant half-mile away.

The ship was close to the beach; it had a list to starboard, the foremast was gone, the rigging of the main-mast was hanging in tatters, the deck was littered with torn-off boards, and a great gaping hole was where the pilot-house should have been. It was the *Sachs*; and the *Sachs* was wrecked! There was no other vessel in sight. Standing on the beach was the wheel-house, its many small, round port-holes, at one of which a face was pressed against the glass, looked strangely out of place there on dry land. A column of black smoke was ascending from the stubby stovepipe which projected from the flat roof.

The door opened and two men came out. We were by that time almost up to the house. Stefansson ran to meet us.

"Boys, we're stranded. The *Polar Bear* has been here. They've wrecked our ship, they've taken away all the sledges, the Primus stoves, the sledge shoeing, dog-harness, they've even carried off our books!"

CHAPTER XXV

THIRTY-FIVE hundred miles of sledging, only to find at our journey's end a broken-up ship and a ravaged storehouse! Gonzales had used all the craft within the range of his limited intelligence to maroon us on Banks for a year. Because it was summer and sledge travel was done, he knew that we should cache our sledges as soon as we got off the sea-ice at the north coast of Banks, over 125 miles away. He knew too that, first, we could not get these sledges until snow covered the ground, and, secondly, that they would be weakened, probably broken and useless, after the heavy ice trip; so he had taken away the hard wood for sledge-building and the spare steel sledge shoeing. He meant to prevent us from building sledges and crossing, as soon as the ice froze thick enough, to the mainland, where we could get in touch with the Royal North-west Mounted Police. He had taken the Primus stoves, which we used for heating and cooking during winter travel, because he thought the lack of them would decide us against making the attempt, even should we succeed in building a sledge out of the wreckage of the *Sachs*. He had not planned to starve us, for he had not taken away the cereal foods, or our ammunition; though he had taken most of the sledge rations and pemmican for the dogs, probably all that he did not overlook. And, with a fine show of responsibility toward Government stores, he had put our Kellett base in charge of Binder and Masik—two trappers who had been landed on Banks the previous autumn by the trading schooner *Challenge*—with rigid instructions to guard it carefully. This lofty gesture, made at the very moment when he was double-crossing

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his Commander, was characteristic, but somehow it failed to evoke our admiration.

The motive seemed to us as plain as the facts. We knew from Knight that Gonzales had disobeyed his orders deliberately when he had failed to bring the *Polar Bear* to Melville Island the previous summer ; and we knew also that the reason why he had visited us in the spring, just before the ice trip, was to make specious excuses and hoodwink the Commander. Evidently then, Gonzales, fearing that Knight would tell the whole story to Stefansson, and that Stefansson would punish him by withholding his pay, had planned to maroon us for at least a year, while he sailed out to the Pacific and south to the Canadian naval station at Esquimalt, where he believed he could make out a plausible story and collect his wages.

Binder, who had been an eyewitness of the destruction of the *Sachs*, held letters for Stefansson from Storkerson, Castel, and several of the others. Briefly, these letters stated that Gonzales, as senior officer of the expedition in Stefansson's absence, had ordered them all aboard the *Polar Bear* ; then without having given them a hint of his purpose, he had rowed to the *Sachs* with some of the crew and wrecked her.

Our predicament was manifest, and our anger ran high. But the dismantled hull of the *Sachs* lying there on the beach mutely testified to a disaster more serious than ours and more tragic than her own destruction. Captain Peter Bernard, who had sailed the *Mary Sachs* for years, and loved her, would not have stood quietly by while the axe bit into her. Bernard was dead. And with him had perished his comrade, Thomsen.

The real story of how they perished we never learned. From the meagre details we had from Binder, from Castel's letters, and later from Charlie and Castel in person, *plus* our knowledge of the two men and of the conditions of Arctic travel, I will tell the story as I think it must have happened. It is a story of heroic endeavour, of unselfishness and faithfulness ; and, as such, it seems to me to be

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a fitting preface to the record of the return journey of Storkerson's party from the ice trip; for though Storkie, Charlie, and Castel survived, while in similar conditions Bernard and Thomsen perished, yet both parties of men showed a like nobility, courage, and adherence to duty as they saw it. And it was Charlie and Castel, come alive through their own perils, who found the only traces of the others.

It will be remembered that when Storkie's party left us out on the moving ice they had sufficient dog-feed to last until they reached the shore floe, where they expected to get seals and food for themselves for five days more. They made good speed for the first few miles; then they entered the jungle of pressure-ridges. The going was now so rough that Charlie, who was rapidly growing weaker, could no longer ride. He stumbled on painfully behind the sledges. At last they reached the floe, and crossed immediately to the land-fast ice, for the floe was closed. This was their first ill-chance, for here they had hoped to find open water and seals. They were now out of dog-feed. They planned to strike directly for Borden Island, the nearest land, where they hoped to get caribou, but a severe blizzard held them back for several days. They portioned their own food into scant daily rations to make it last longer and fed some of their old clothing to the dogs. When the blizzard abated they went on to Borden, to be again disappointed. They saw no caribou. They pushed on, making the best speed they could, for the game lands of Melville Island, 150 miles south. Charlie was now so ill that he could no longer walk, the well men were losing strength, and one by one the famished dogs stopped pulling. Storkie and Castel now harnessed themselves to Charlie's sledge and, weakened though they were, dragged their comrade on. When they finally reached Cape Grassy they had used up all their provisions except a little flour, which they were rationing out at the rate of four spoonfuls a day per man. They searched the refuse heaps at Nat-kusiak's old camp and found some bones, which had been

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thrown away after having been picked clean. They broke these bones and made broth out of them. Then again they pushed on south. Natkusiak hunted inland, but without success.

About twenty miles south of Grassy they ran across a meat-cache which Natkusiak had made the previous spring. The meat had rotted during the summer; it was now frozen into a solid mass. They cracked off pieces and fed themselves and the dogs. Without it they could not have held out much longer. They went on again, and soon killed ovibos. At their kill they also made a Camp Hospital. They remained there until Charlie was cured of scurvy and men and dogs were strong enough to proceed. On the south coast of Melville they separated. Castel and Charlie headed for Banks Island, Storkie and the others for the *Polar Bear*.

Castel and Charlie had instructions from the Commander to take that route which Bernard and Thomsen would most likely have followed had they really set out for our camp as Gonzales had reported. They saw no traces while crossing Melville Sound, but at Mercy Bay, on Banks Island, they found two abandoned sledges. Attached to the handlebars of one of them was the following note:

December 22, 1916.—We made a cache on the ice twenty miles N.N.E. from here. We are out of grub and our dogs are dying. Eight of the dogs have died and we have ten left. We have the mail, which we are taking with us.

(Signed) PETER BERNARD
CHARLES THOMSEN

Here Castel and Charlie turned west, trying to follow Bernard's trail. But it was now so old that for the most part it was covered up and they saw it only once about every five miles. After they had travelled west two days they came upon the middle section of a sledge. Apparently Bernard and Thomsen had lost most of their dogs and had had to chop off the sledge in order to lighten it. Not far from the sledge section they came to a snowdrift which was crisscrossed in every direction by fox-tracks. Seeing a

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number of pieces of caribou-skin scattered about, Castel and Charlie assumed that the carcass of a caribou lay beneath the drift. Charlie commenced digging. Presently he called to Castel that Bernard and Thomsen could not have been so short of food after all, because he had just uncovered the white skin of some salt pork which they must have thrown away. But another thrust of the shovel revealed the horrible truth. What Charlie had really found was the naked shoulder of Thomsen! Castel and Charlie uncovered the body, and were surprised to find the hands bare; on one foot was an ordinary boot, on the other only a house slipper.

The face was not particularly thin and the features were composed as if in sleep. The evidence seemed to indicate that Thomsen had not died of actual starvation, but that he had been lost in a blizzard. This could easily occur. Perhaps one night, during a bad blizzard, he had gone outside—it might be to quell a dog-fight—had lost his bearings in the blinding, whirling storm, as has happened to men before, and been unable to find his way back to the house. It is said that men who are about to freeze to death often lose their wits and throw away their clothes; this might account for the half-naked state of the body.

Castel and Charlie dug a shallow trench in the frozen ground for Thomsen's body, covered it over with rocks to protect it from foxes and wolves, and left a note in a cairn, which they erected beside the grave, for Natkusiak, who would follow them later in the year, when the ground had thawed, to make the grave deeper and more secure. They had done the best they could for a good trail-mate, so they continued their journey. They soon found sledge-tracks, proving that Bernard, after the loss of Thomsen, had struggled on alone. The tracks led them to two food-caches which had been made in the spring; and they saw that stoves had been taken from both depots. A hundred yards west of the last depot they saw signs that Bernard had stopped to rest. This was the last trace they found.

Here the land became low and flat. There was no means

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of telling whether Bernard had continued on the sea-ice or had taken to the land. So they zigzagged from land to ice searching, without result. This is all we know of the end of two of our best comrades.

Both men were experienced travellers. Thomsen was an excellent trail-picker and our best snow-house builder. In 1914 he had made an ice trip with the Commander west from Banks, and had been with him when he discovered Borden Island. Later he had made the trip from Cape Ross, Melville Island, to Kellett, some four hundred miles, all alone. I should have said that if any man knew how to take care of himself on trail Thomsen did. Bernard had travelled more than Thomsen. As United States mail courier in Alaska for a number of years, he had covered thousands of miles by dog-team. But along the mail-routes in Alaska there were road-houses where he could replenish his supply of dog-food. And this tragedy—so far as we can deduce from the few facts we have—apparently resulted from lack of proper dog-food. When they left Kellett they were feeding their dogs with rice and blubber, which makes a satisfactory dog-ration. They had two teams and three sledges, and heavy loads. Two of the sledges were the new ones which Bernard had made for us, strong, heavy ice-sledges. They had loaded them with things which they thought we specially needed—a big roll of sledge canvas, new Primus stoves, presents of tobacco, and all the expedition mail which Captain Petersen had landed. The mail itself must have weighed about five hundred pounds. These details we got later from Mrs Thomsen.

Evidently Bernard and Thomsen had overestimated the speed they could make with these loads, and by the time they reached the north coast of Banks they had used up all the blubber. They had gone on, feeding to the dogs rice without fat. On this diet the dogs had quickly weakened. It is possible that they were also attacked by dog-sickness. Out of eighteen dogs eight had died when the men turned back. They had now no food left for themselves; so they pushed on toward the first food-cache.

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Before they reached it Thomsen had perished ; yet apparently not of starvation. If he had been lost in a blizzard, as we think, he must have wandered far, for Castel and Charlie found no signs of a camp in the vicinity.

Bernard reached this food-cache and the one farther on. There was sugar in these caches, but Bernard apparently did not know that he could feed sugar to the dogs. The sugar would have taken the place of fat and saved his dogs.

Before Thomsen died they had cached two sledges and all their load, except the five hundred pounds of mail. Had they cached this mail too, there might have been no tragedy. But Bernard was an old mail man, with the traditions of that service. To him the abandonment of the mail to increase his own chances would be unthinkable disloyalty. No doubt, too, he thought of what the letters meant to us, cut off from our relatives and friends ; of the importance to Stefansson of Government mail. At all events, no packages, even of printed matter cast away, were found along the sixty or seventy miles from the point where Thomsen's body was found to the place where Bernard's traces disappeared. The shadows of conjecture close about him thick as the Arctic night in which he and his emaciated dogs and the mail-sacks vanished. Perhaps on some ice-cake, set adrift by the spring winds, to be caught fast again miles out on the Beaufort Sea in the next freeze-up, Pete Bernard's skeleton still keeps watch over the fragments of the mail.

When Charlie and Castel reached Kellett they found there the two trappers, Binder and Masik, who told them that the Kilian brothers, whom Gonzales had sent to Kellett in November, had waited for the return of Bernard and Thomsen until May, and had then gone back to the *Polar Bear*.

It now devolved upon Castel to put the *Sachs* in trim. It was no easy matter. When the *Sachs* had sailed north to Kellett in 1914 she had leaked so badly that it had been necessary to keep the pumps working forty minutes out of each hour. She had now lain high and dry on the

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firewood. His idea was to take everything which would be of use to us in trying to leave the island. He made no objection to the men leaving letters for Stefansson, for long before Stefansson could act on those letters he would have got away.

Lastly, he instructed Binder and Masik, who were left in charge of the base, to break up the *Sachs* at once and use her lumber for building a cabin and for firewood. Then he weighed anchor and set sail.

Marooned on an Arctic island!

It was no wonder that we all felt bitter against the *Polar Bear* gang. But the only thing to do was to make the best of things until the Beaufort Sea froze over. There was always a slim chance that a ship might visit Kellett before the freeze-up.

As Binder had not finished building his cabin we spent the next day in sawing boards for flooring and making bunks for ourselves. Then Masik, Knight, and I went down to a fish-creek, about twelve miles from our house, and set a number of nets. The run was just about over, but Masik and Knight stayed there to get what fish they could and to cut them up for drying, while I returned with some fresh ones for dog-feed.

When I got back I found that Split had had the misfortune to run a nail into his foot. It was not serious, but it incapacitated him for hunting. As the Commander did not dare to leave Kellett while there was a chance of a ship coming, the task of getting skins for clothing fell upon me. I made several hunts for caribou, but the animals had apparently deserted the coastal territory. Knight and Masik returned on the 25th and I made a long hunt inland on the 26th. Just before dusk I saw a large band of caribou, and, as the light would be too poor for shooting when I caught up with them, for they were about five miles from me, I decided to return to camp and bring back some of my companions the next morning.

We could establish a hunting-camp at the kill, and this camp could later be used as a stopping-place on our trip

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back to where we had cached the sledges on the north-east corner of the island ; for the Commander had decided to send Knight, Split, and me back after them as soon as we were absolutely certain no ship was coming.

Although we were, perforce, making our plans to remain on Banks, I never returned from a hunt without a feeling of expectancy—Should I see a ship in the offing ?—would there be visitors in camp ?

On this evening as I approached the house I heard animated conversation within and I thought I could distinguish strange voices. Then beside the door I saw a canvas gun-case with the name Crawford marked plainly upon it.

“ Hello, Noice ! ” Crawford greeted me as I threw the door open.

“ Hello there, Crawford ! ”

The two visitors were Captain Crawford of the trading-ship *Challenge* and one of his sailors. The captain had arrived that very morning, and had walked over from the Kellett sandspit, where his ship was anchored. He and his partner, Leo Wittenberg, with a crew of whites and natives, intended to winter on Banks Island. But it wasn't long before Stefansson had talked him into selling the *Challenge* to the expedition. Twenty-four hours later we were on our way.

The reflection of the wrecked *Sachs*, atilt on the beach, quivered in our wake, and faded. Banks Island dropped astern. Slowly the green, brown, and grey hues of its grass, sod, and beach-sand were merged and lost in the blue of distance ; slowly its outlines diminished, till only a dark knob marred the horizon's curve ; then this too vanished.

CHAPTER XXVI

CRAWFORD and some of his men stayed behind to trap, while Wittenberg and one of the Eskimo families came with us as passengers.

Masik, being the best sailor of us all, was captain. Binder was engineer, the rest of us were crew. Everything was lovely. The sun shone brightly ; not a breath of air was stirring. There was no ice visible and the Beaufort Sea lay as calm and smooth as a lake. It was an incongruous thought that those placid waters had been so recently stirred by the keel of a mutineer. Though our hearts were full of thanksgiving for the fortunate chance which had sent a ship to us, yet our joy was tempered by the unchristian regret that our enemies, who would reach civilization ahead of us, should escape punishment. We steered a straight course for Herschel Island. Toward evening we struck thick ice. A dense fog came on ; and as it is well-nigh impossible to work ice in a fog, we turned south-east and felt our way along the border of the pack. Night fell ; we steamed along at half speed. Daybreak, and a rising wind, found us still close to the ice.

Wind plays weird tricks upon one's vision when it begins to romp through acres of fog over an ice-field, distorting the shapes and sizes of ice-cakes into what appear to be islands or huge bergs, and sometimes even convincing the watcher that he can descry the hull and masts of a vessel. So it did this morning. As we steamed slowly along the edge of the pack, with the fog-bank ahead of us alternately massing and thinning, it seemed to us, once or twice, that we saw the ghostly outlines of a ship. Then the fog lifted suddenly, and before our astonished eyes lay the *Polar Bear*, less than two miles away !

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We steamed toward her. Gonzales, of course, recognized our ship. The *Challenge* had wintered close to the *Bear* in Walker Bay, and there had been pleasant visitings back and forth, and card games. But he was totally ignorant that she had been to Kellett, so he headed the *Bear* toward her. Stefansson went below, and Split, Knight, and I concealed ourselves. Wittenberg ran up a distress-signal, then climbed into the rigging as though directing the ship's movements, and one of his Eskimos took the wheel.

Unsuspectingly the *Polar Bear* steamed right up to us. We could recognize every man on her decks. Then we let ourselves be seen and hailed Gonzales.

"Stefansson is aboard and wants to speak to you. Tie up to the ice."

We watched the effect of this through our glasses. Every one aboard the *Bear* must have been thunderstruck, because for a moment nobody moved. The first detail I remember noticing was the broad grin on Charlie's face; then he and Castel slapped each other on the back. Gonzales and Seymour were in consultation, and not smiling. Gonzales, of course, realized that resistance was useless. He climbed to the crow's-nest. I had often admired the grace with which Gonzales swung his splendid physique aloft, but never more than now! He bellowed down orders, and the *Polar Bear* circled over to the ice. As soon as her bow touched, the willing Storkie leaped ashore on the pack, caught the line flung him, and made fast to an ice-boulder.

We also tied up to the pack. The Commander had given orders for Gonzales to be shown to the cabin immediately he came aboard. We were requested not to disturb them. A whaleboat was lowered, and Gonzales, with a crew of natives, came alongside. By a preconcerted plan none of us spoke, but as Gonzales' face appeared over the rail the irrepressible little Split shook his fist at it.

"Where is Mr Stefansson?"

I pointed down into the cabin, where the Commander had seated himself at the chart-table, facing the scuttle. Gonzales went below. The scuttle door was closed. Fifteen

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minutes later the door opened. Gonzales came on deck, walked to the rail with something less than his old swagger, and got into his boat. His natives cast loose from us and pulled over to the *Bear*.

We crowded down into the cabin to hear what the Commander had to say. He told us that the reason Gonzales gave for destroying the *Sachs* was that he considered her unseaworthy; the reason he had chopped out the mast was that he needed firewood for his galley stove; and the reason he had taken away the sledges and other things was that he thought his ship might get crushed in the ice while crossing over to the mainland, in which event he would need them himself. We then asked the Commander what he was going to do about such flimsy excuses. He replied that he would first hear what Storkie and the others had to say.

A boat was seen approaching from the *Bear*, bringing Castel, who, Stefansson said, would take charge of the *Challenge* while he transferred to the *Bear*. With Castel came Charlie. We were certainly glad to see each other.

Thinking that I knew Gonzales rather better than Stefansson did, I urged him to leave with me his diaries and the official papers of the expedition. He pooh-poohed my caution, but, in accordance with his favourite motto, "Better be safe than sorry," he gave them to me.

The Commander was rowed over to the *Bear*, we cast loose from our ice anchorage, and both ships set sail for Baillie Islands. The *Challenge* was one of the swiftest craft in the Arctic. Castel enlisted her pretty speed in a unique and bloodless revenge. He crowded on all the canvas she could stand, and all day long we sailed in circles round the *Bear*—and nothing makes a captain madder than that. Each time we completed the circuit and swung by close under her stern Castel would hold out the bight of a rope. We kept together for the rest of the day; but a fog came on and we lost trace of each other during the night.

In three days we reached Baillie Islands, and smashed our way through a blockade of ice into the harbour. A

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Hudson's Bay post had recently been established there, and quite a crowd of whites and Eskimos greeted us as we landed, among them many of our friends of 1915. There was a celebration that evening in our honour.

Three days later the *Polar Bear* arrived. They had not had such good luck as we ; also Castel was a better captain than Gonzales.

Naturally we were keen to know what dire punishment would be meted out to Gonzales ; of course, we had not actually expected to see him come ashore in irons, but we had hoped for it. But all that Stefansson did to him was to discharge him, and to cancel his pay from the time of his refusal to bring the ship north to Melville Island, which made us almost as mad with Stefansson as we were with Gonzales. Split and Knight and I secretly resolved that if ever we got a chance at Gonzales alone——! As it happened I was the only one who did get that chance, of which more anon.

Seymour also was discharged. Hadley was made captain of the *Polar Bear*, and Castel first mate. The other men, with the exception of myself and some of the Eskimos, proceeded with the expedition to Herschel.

At Baillie I requested, and received, my discharge. To explain fully why, I should have to review the long series of pleasant hours in camp at the day's end, when Stefansson would relate his former experiences in the North. I had listened eagerly to his stories of Eskimo life, and I had pondered all that he had said about the great opportunity for scientific research among the primitive 'Copper' Eskimos—how a man with the initiative to go into their country and live with them might make valuable contributions to philology and ethnology by the study of their as yet little-known language and customs. He had told me also of his archæological researches, of how he had found the house-ruins of prehistoric Eskimos west of Coronation Gulf. And before our trailing was done the contact with Stefansson and his personal interest in my progress had steadied and directed my old love of adventure, with scientific purpose.

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Desiring to prepare myself in every way possible, I had studied all the scientific books which we had with us, and having had two years' experience of Arctic travel I felt confident of being able to take care of myself anywhere in the North.

My dream, then, had been taking shape for some time. While we were sailing from Kellett to Baillie Islands I first saw the means of making the dream real. On the second day, after we had lost the *Bear* in the fog and the little *Challenge* was scurrying along, I took an observation to determine our position, and, as usual, entered it in my diary. Having very little else to do, and perhaps being moved by regretful or sentimental feelings because the great adventure was so nearly ended, I amused myself by glancing back over the entries. I struck this one, made just after Charlie, Split, Storkie, and I had our most strenuous experience of mushing through the blackness and cold of the Melville Island winter :

Jan. 15, 1917.—In camp at Storkerson's still stormbound. Have been busy in cutting dog-feed, repairing our gear, building wind-brakes for the dogs. Dug out the seal-meat and blubber yesterday, which was completely snowed over. Are ready to start for Grassy as soon as the weather moderates. I had a long talk with Mr Stefansson to-day, in which he told me that he thought I had done my best to make things go this winter and, as a reward, raised my wages . . . for the winter's work. . . . I volunteered for the position of meteorologist (on the ice trip of the next spring), which I held on the last ice trip, and was accepted.

As I reread it that cryptic entry seemed to crystallize things for me. There was the very worst of the North in it—stormbound, cold work with gear and frozen blubber, the memory of trail-making through darkness and bitter cold ; but my diary was evidence that, while I was going through it, it had not discouraged me or the other men enough to make me give it one impressive adjective. That was the worst of the North. I knew some of the best too ; and the best was very good.

WITH STEFANSSON IN THE ARCTIC

Stefansson's few words of commendation rather than the rise in wages had counted with me; because, obviously, when you cannot collect your wages for at least a year, and may never collect them—as Thomsen and Bernard will never collect theirs—money seems less than a trifle.

But now the day of payment was near for me, and I began to think of spending. Then, like a flash, it occurred to me that with the recovery of the *Polar Bear* Stefansson would no longer need the *Challenge*. Very good! I would buy her, and go into the country of the 'Copper' Eskimos with an expedition of my own.

When the *Challenge* arrived at Baillie I met a fur-trader, named Carroll, of whom I had heard the Commander speak. Carroll was a tall, spare Texan, an educated man who had spent a long time in the North, chiefly on the Mackenzie River, where he had represented the Northern Trading Company of Edmonton. His superiors had recently instructed him to make a survey of trade and other possibilities in the territory of the 'Copper' Eskimos about Coronation Gulf. Here was my opportunity! I proposed to Carroll that we should buy the *Challenge* between us and sail her east into Coronation Gulf, where he could carry on his commercial operations and I my scientific researches.

This plan was quickly consummated after Stefansson arrived. I bought a five-eighths interest in the *Challenge*, Carroll a quarter, and Binder an eighth.

I was captain, Carroll was mate, and Binder engineer. Two white trappers, George Dillon and his twenty-year-old son, Miles, the Eskimo Komona and his family, were engaged as crew. How proudly I stamped up and down my quarterdeck—twenty-two years old, a captain, and leader of an Arctic expedition!

The *Polar Bear* was to sail the next morning, and that evening I went over to say good-bye to the boys—and to the dogs, Tulugak, Red, and Mike, my pal, Comic, and fat old Hans. The Commander, who was busy paying off the natives, said he would come aboard 'my ship' later and have a talk with me.

WITH STEFANSSON IN THE ARCTIC

It was long after dark when Miles appeared at the scuttle and called down :

" Oh, captain ! Mr Stefansson is aboard." Very sensible of his new importance, the ' captain ' hurried on deck.

" Well, Noice, how does it feel to be leader of your own expedition ? "

We sat down on the combing of the cabin skylight and talked of all I hoped to achieve. And the advice I received that night I had good cause later to be thankful for.

One by one the lights in the houses on shore went out. Only the red and green running lights of the *Polar Bear* and the *Challenge* shone on the darkened water.

" I'll say good-bye now, Noice. It is getting late and we leave at daybreak."

Stefansson swung over the rail. I watched his boat melt into the shadows. When I went on deck next morning the *Polar Bear* had vanished.

That afternoon I went into the village to look for Gonzales. Stefansson had told me something about him which had increased my anxiety to meet him. He had told me that Gonzales had a sextant for sale. It was the only sextant at Baillie. Gonzales was living in a tent beside the cabin he was building. He saw me coming and, lithe as a wild cat, swung down from the ridge-pole. He hailed me cheerily, the white flash of a smile lighting his swarthy face, his hand outstretched. He wanted me to trade him some pemmican for his dogs—he was going to put in the winter trapping. But there was something else he wanted. When the *Bear* and the *Challenge* had wintered at Walker Bay Gonzales had been much impressed by the elegant sight of Captain Crawford's teacups hanging upon little brass hooks on the cabin wall. Had I any more of those bright little hooks aboard the *Challenge* ? He had just bought Mamayauk some fancy teacups. Yes, I had some, and would throw them in with the pemmican and take the sextant in exchange. Just then little Mamayauk appeared at the tent door and announced that tea was ready. We went in and Mamayauk served tea to us